POLITICAL PAPERS,

CHIEFLY RESPECTING THE

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AND OTHER

CONSIDERABLE DISTRICTS,

COMMENCED IN 1779, AND CONTINUED DURING SEVERAL SUBSEQUENT YEARS, TO EFFECT A

REFORMATION

OF THE

PARLIAMENT OF GREAT-BRITAIN:

COLLECTED BY THE

Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,

CHAIRMAN OF THE LATE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION OF THE COUNTY OF YORK.

VOLUME IV.

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PREFACE

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TO THE

FOURTH VOLUME.

THIS Volume, promiſed to the Public eight years ago, and for various reaſons thus long delayed, by the change of our political circumſtances is now permitted to appear. At firſt, indeed, the delay was voluntary, but the reaſons for that voluntary delay were of little importance, and to explain them would be trifling with the Reader's time. After ſome years, from the increaſing violence of political animoſity, and the rigour of our Courts of Juſtice, the delay became unavoidable. At the time alluded to, the Bookſellers were intimidated, and the Preſs was enſlaved to a degree unknown in this Country ſince the reign of William the Third. Political Papers ſubmitted to the conſideration of the firſt Lawyer of the age, and by him pronounced to be agreeable to Law and the Conſtitution, could find no Publiſher in the uſual mode. They were printed, however, and by the aſſiſtance of Friends they were diſtributed, though publication *by reputable Bookſellers* could not be effected. Fortunately, the fears of ſuch men have

have been calmed, in ſome meaſure, and they have dared again to unlock the Preſs to free diſcuſſion. The diſmiſſal of Mr. Pitt, and the conſequent Peace with France, have produced changes in the national condition which are favourable in various reſpects; but among the advantages derived from theſe events, the renewed facility of publication on Conſtitutional ſubjects is not one of the leaſt valuable.

The opportunity which had been for years unhoped, was ſeized by the Editor, and this Fourth Volume of his Collection was completed with all convenient diſpatch. It contains the reſidue of the Papers in his poſſeſſion, written from the firſt propoſal of Reform to the Yorkſhire Gentlemen in 1779, to the cloſe of their Committee in 1786. It chiefly conſiſts of the Editor's Correſpondence with Perſons in different parts of the Kingdom, on the ſubject of Political Reformation, ſome of whom are dead, and ſome are ſtill living; many of them honourable men in private ſtations; many of them diſtinguiſhed among the moſt eminent men of the age for their literary ability; and ſome of them Stateſmen who have a juſt claim to the gratitude of their Country, for their exertions in the Cauſe of INTEGRITY and FREEDOM. The Letters of ſuch Men, probably, will not be unintereſting to thoſe who are attached to the principles of the Conſtitution, and who have formed the generous reſolution to contribute their aſſiſtance to ſupport them. If other men ſhould deign to peruſe this volume,

whoſe

whose hearts never felt a wish for the preservation of Public Liberty, whose bosoms never heaved with one honest movement of scorn at the profligate Corruption of the Times, let such men inspect it with inquisitorial zeal to detect Sedition or Political Heresy. Errors such as rational men might fall into, faults such as sincere Patriots might commit, may here be found. But the Editor relies with confidence, that Enmity itself can point out no passage in this volume which can be justly thought injurious to good morals, offensive to the Laws, or hostile to the Constitution of our Country. And the sober-minded Friend of Liberty, while he laments the Ex-Minister's desertion of the Cause of Reform, and his failure to attain that elevation of consistent Virtue which constitutes the only true dignity, will acknowledge that the general tenor of the Reformers' conduct, described in this Collection, was temperate and public spirited, and the success of their plans would have insured the Freedom and Happiness of the Community.

BURTON-HALL, *June 8th*, 1802.

NUMBER

NUMBER XXIX.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, *Nov.* 26, 1782.

Sir,

I Received the favour of your note, accompanying the Reſolutions of the Yorkſhire Committee;* for which I beg to return you many thanks. I forbear entering into any particulars on the ſubject of them. My general ſentiments in favour of a ſubſtantial and practicable Reform of Parliament are invariable.

I am, Sir, with great regard,
Your faithful and obedient ſervant,
W. PITT.

* On the 31ſt of October, 1782.
The note alluded to by Mr. Pitt has not been preſerved.

Paper II.

The Subſtance *of* Mr. WYVILL's Converſation *with* Mr. PITT, *on the 5th of May*, 1783; *communicated to the* Committee *of* Aſſociation *of the* County *of* York, *at their* Meeting, *on the 1ſt of October*, 1783.*

AFTER Mr. Pitt had informed me what his motions on the 7th of May would be, I told him, I much approved the Propoſition for preventing Bribery and Expence at Elections, and that for puniſhing Boroughs with Diſfranchiſement on the conviction of a majority of the Electors having been guilty of corruption.—Reſpecting the third Propoſition, for adding one hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis, I begged to know, whether it was his meaning that the propoſed augmentation of Members ſhould be made according to the proportion between England and Scotland, as eſtabliſhed at the Union; and whether it was his meaning that the Members ſhould be added in equal numbers to the ſeveral Counties, or in a due proportion according to their reſpective population and importance.—Mr. Pitt aſſured me that it was his idea, that the proportion agreed between England and Scotland at the Union ſhould be obſerved in the Diſtribution of the

* At this Meeting, the Committee paſſed Reſolutions, thanking Mr. Pitt for his excellent propoſition to Parliament on the 7th of May, 1783; and expreſſing their hopes of ſucceſs from his virtuous perſeverance.

Members;

Members; but that with regard to the other meaſure, viz. the mode of Diſtribution to the ſeveral Counties, he was not determined. It was, in his own opinion, proper to make the augmentation in a due proportion to the importance of each County; but ſeveral of his friends were inclined to make it by ſimply adding one or two to each County, without any regard to population or ſize. He ſeemed to wiſh for my opinion; I therefore told him, I was glad to find his own judgment led him to make the propoſed addition in due proportion, and earneſtly preſſed him to abide by it. The Nation felt the inconvenience ariſing from the want of foreſight in our forefathers, from whoſe inattention to eſtabliſh and maintain due proportion in the Houſe of Commons, the preſent complaints of the People aroſe. That it behoved us therefore to pay greater attention to Theory than they had done; and to make the diſtribution with a regard to the importance of the Counties. There might be local reaſons, reſpecting the Land-tax, why the Members of ſome parts of England, Bedfordſhire for inſtance, might wiſh the addition ſhould be made equally to each County, without regard to its ſize, &c.; but ſince what would gain thoſe Members, for oppoſite local reaſons, would diſguſt the Members of other parts of the kingdom, there was no advantage likely to reſult from it, in favour of the Plan, which could render it neceſſary or politic to ſacrifice Theory to greater Practicability. But what

ſtruck me moſt forcibly, as an objection to adding an equal number of Members to the ſmall as well as the great Counties, was this, in the ſmall Counties the intereſt of powerful families is found moſt prevalent, in the large Counties the Democracy has uſually the greateſt weight; therefore, adding to the large Counties a proportionably large number of Members, would ſtrengthen the Democracy; whereas, adding as many to the ſmall Counties as to the large, would in a much greater degree ſtrengthen the Ariſtocracy, who are already too powerful in this Country, and the People too little ſo. In my opinion, therefore, the merit of the meaſure of adding more County Members depends greatly on its being done in due proportion.—This obſervation had the effect I deſired with Mr. Pitt; and he determined to declare his opinion in the Houſe, on the 7th of May, that the augmentation ſhould be made *in due proportion.*—I then ventured to ſuggeſt to Mr. Pitt, that as there were ſeveral great unrepreſented Towns, it ſtruck me, that when any corrupt Borough, in conſequence of his intended Regulation, was diſfranchiſed, inſtead of ſinking the number of the Houſe of Commons, it might not be improper to transfer the Election Franchiſe to thoſe Towns; eſpecially, as otherwiſe the proportion between England and Scotland, which he wiſhed to have maintained, muſt probably be very ſoon broken through to a conſiderable degree. But as Mr. Pitt wiſhed to obviate ob-

jections

jections to increaſing the number of Members, by providing means for their gradual decreaſe again, what I obſerved on this head did not meet his ideas. I alſo hinted, that his plan would be better received in the Capital, if in the courſe of his Speech he took occaſion to mention, that the addition to the Capital would chiefly go to the unrepreſented Inhabitants of Marybone, Pancras, Tower Hamlets, &c. But though he ſeemed to concur in ſentiment, he did not chuſe to touch upon the caſe of unrepreſented Perſons, but to keep the ſubject as clear as poſſible in the outſet of any matter that could give offence. He ſeemed perfectly aware of the apprehenſions entertained concerning the Duke of Richmond's Plan, and reſolved to avoid any thing that might bear the moſt diſtant conſtruction of having a tendency that way.—I then told Mr. Pitt how much I approved his whole Plan, as now explained, and my opinion that it would be generally approved in Yorkſhire, as being full as much as they had any reaſon to expect he would propoſe to Parliament. The Regulation reſpecting the Diſfranchiſement of corrupt Boroughs appeared to me particularly happy. And I thought, if his three propoſitions were carried into effect, and the Septennial Bill was repealed, the objects of the Yorkſhire Aſſociation would be attained, and the County would probably determine to diſſolve the Committee.

I was happy to find Mr. Pitt was impreſſed with ſentiments of great reſpect for the character and conduct of the Yorkſhire Gentlemen,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, *May 23d*, 1783.

Sir,

WHEN you did me the honour, on the 5th inſtant, to explain your views in framing the three Propoſitions which were ſubmitted to the conſideration of Parliament on the 7th inſt. I had no heſitation to declare my hearty approbation of your Plan. In my apprehenſion, thoſe Propoſitions were judiciouſly adapted to the preſent ſtate of Public Opinion, and were calculated to procure the beſt and moſt extenſive Reformation of Parliament, which could then be propoſed with any probability of ſucceſs, or on any ſufficient ground of popular Declaration. If Parliament had conſented to add one hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis, and to eſtabliſh Regulations for the prevention of Bribery and Expence at Elections, and for the Diſfranchiſement of Boroughs guilty of groſs and general Corruption, by thoſe Improvements of the Conſtitution, and the Repeal of the Septennial Bill, the objects of the Aſſociation of the County of York would have been completely attained, and in ſome reſpects exceeded. The admiſſion of Copyholders to the Right of Election, the abolition of fictitious Votes in Scotland, and the Correction of inferior, local abuſes of Election, might

be

be expected to follow that Renovation of the Conſtitution, without any farther interpoſition of the People, by their Committees. And if the means thus provided for checking groſs Corruption ſhould hereafter be found inadequate to that purpoſe, and the decayed and venal Boroughs ſhould ſtill endanger the Liberty of the Nation, it is evident that after every milder method of Correction had failed to ſecure the Freedom and Independence of Parliament, the AMPUTATION of thoſe Boroughs, by an Act of the Legiſlature, on due application from the People, would be a meaſure perfectly unexceptionable, and alſo practicable with much greater facility than it can be thought at preſent. On theſe grounds I ventured to declare to you my firm perſuaſion that, if your Propoſitions ſhould be adopted by Parliament, and the Septennial Bill ſhould be repealed, that Parliamentary Reformation would be ſatisfactory to the County of York, and the Commitee would probably be diſſolved at the next General Meeting of the County. As far as I could form a judgment of the diſpoſition of ſo large a Body of Men, this appeared to me moſt conſiſtent with their uſual candour and moderation; and I am happy to aſſure you, Sir, from ſubſequent correſpondence, I am ſatisfied, I did not materially miſrepreſent their ſentiments.

But I truſt the opinion ſtated to you, what in that caſe probably would be their conduct, was ſufficiently underſtood to bear an imme-

diate reference to the actual circumſtances of the County, *at that time only*. Parliament, by rejecting your Plan, has in effect refuſed any redreſs of that national grievance, the groſs Inequality of the Repreſentation of the People, of which the County of York, and many other great and important Diſtricts, had complained. The refuſal loudly calls upon thoſe Bodies to reiterate their application to Parliament, and to preſs with increaſing vigour for a due correction of that alarming abuſe. If, therefore, in the courſe of this unavoidable ſtruggle, the Yorkſhire Gentlemen ſhall be ſupported by a more general concurrence of their fellow citizens, and terms of greater advantage to the Conſtitution, than thoſe which Parliament has ſo recently rejected, ſhall appear to be attainable, by regular and legal means, in juſtice to themſelves, in juſtice to the Public, and to Poſterity, they will not ſtop ſhort at inferior Improvements. But the County of York, far from wiſhing to puſh the Reformation of Parliament to an indefinite extent, has guarded againſt the poſſibility of that exceſs, by its Reſolutions on the 19th of December, 1782. There the County has drawn a line, beyond which, in my conception, it ſtands pledged not to proceed; but within thoſe limits it certainly may be expected to exert ſtrenuous efforts to obtain the beſt poſſible ſecurity for the Rights and Liberty of the Nation.

Feeling as they do the utmoſt gratitude for your generous, though hitherto unſucceſsful,

ceſsful endeavours to RESTORE THE CONSTITUTION, I am perſuaded the Yorkſhire Gentlemen will, with perfect confidence, rely on your zeal to promote the moſt effectual Reformation of Parliament which, in any future ſituation of the Country, may be found practicable. I have the honour to be,

With high reſpect, Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

The Subſtance *of* Mr. WYVILL's Converſation *with the* Right Hon. W. PITT, *Feb.* 15*th*, 1784; *communicated to the* Yorkſhire Gentlemen *alluded to in it.*

I Told Mr. Pitt that I wiſhed for an opportunity to inform him what was paſſing in Yorkſhire, on the ſubject of an Addreſs to the Throne; that a Requiſition to the Sheriff, for a County Meeting to be called for that purpoſe, had been ſigned about ten days ago by a few Gentlemen in the Weſt-Riding; that their number was now increaſed to fifty-four; and as it ſeemed agreeable to the ſenſe of that part of the County, that there was little doubt the meaſure would take place. I mentioned my own general approbation of it; but I thought there might be ſome danger from running precipitately into an Addreſs on the ſubject of Prerogative; there might be future inconvenience from it; and, therefore, in concurrence

currence with other Gentlemen, I wiſhed the queſtion there to be, an Addreſs for the Diſſolution of Parliament. On this ſubject Mr. Pitt expreſſed ſome difficulties; declared his intention, however, not to agree to any conciliation with the better part of his opponents, unleſs the India Bill, as calculated to eſtabliſh a new Executive Power, was given up; and alſo ſuch other meaſures as had a ſimilar tendency; but thought it now plain, that let Government change hands as it might, thoſe dangerous meaſures muſt be defeated. On this, I told Mr. Pitt how much I had rejoiced at the part he had taken in oppoſing the India Bill, and that I had no doubt the Public would ſupport him in requiring that meaſure to be given up: that as to the difficulties attending a Diſſolution of Parliament, I was aware of them; but if the Supplies were ſtopt, if the annual Mutiny Bill was rejected, if public buſineſs was ſtill obſtructed, in that caſe a Diſſolution of Parliament ſeemed to be perfectly juſtifiable,* as the only conſtitutional meaſure by which Government could be ſupported; that the Meeting of the County of York would probably not take place for three weeks, in order to give time for theſe matters to be aſcertained. If Union on the ground ſpecified by Mr. Pitt was at all attainable, it probably would be attained within that time;

* The idea here ſuggeſted was adopted by the Meeting of the County of York on the 25th of March, 1784; in whoſe Petition it may be found expanded, and at large inſiſted on, at the 327th page of the 2d volume of Political Papers.

and

and the Supplies, the Mutiny Bill, &c. would be decided.

On the ſubject of Union, Mr. Pitt agreed it muſt take place ſoon, or not at all; conſidering the manner in which he had been treated, it could not be ſuppoſed that Union could be particularly pleaſant to him; but that for the Public Good he thought it would be right to agree to it, on the terms already mentioned; that Lord North was now out of the queſtion, and therefore a Union with the beſter part of the Oppoſition was what he had ſome hope of, though he could not be very ſanguine in his expectations of it.

C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

YORK TAVERN, *April* 3, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I Received laſt night the honour of your Letter from Mr. Wilberforce, juſt after the Nomination Meeting had been cloſed by the Sheriff's declaration of a very conſiderable majority of hands in favour of Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Wilberforce. I was aware, from the beginning of this buſineſs, that great prejudices againſt the Aſſociation ſubſiſted, in the minds of many Gentlemen here, who are Friends to your Adminiſtration; and, onmy

own

own part, have found it extremely difficult to avoid rouſing thoſe perſonal reſentments againſt myſelf, which my former conduct had excited, and my preſent had not extinguiſhed. It was not poſſible to avoid a public diſcuſſion of the topic of the Aſſociation, not indeed at the County Meeting, but, however, at a very large Meeting of our Confederate Friends on the evening of the 26th of March. The diſcuſſion ended in mutual ſatisfaction, and, I hope, a total diſmiſſion of the jealouſies which had been conceived, and which threatened a breach that muſt have rendered any attempt to diſplace Mr. Foljambe totally impracticable. The next day (the 27th of March) it was reſolved to call the Meeting held yeſterday for the nomination of Candidates; and the whole of the buſineſs ever ſince has been conducted with perfect cordiality, both in our private Meetings, and alſo at the Great Meeting of the County yeſterday. From the general attendance of the Freeholders, without ſolicitation on our part, and the warmth with which the joint nomination of Meſſ. Duncombe and Wilberforce was ſupported by them, I have no doubt the ſenſe of the County is decidedly in our favour; and though violent efforts will be made againſt our Friends, and the moſt compulſive means will be uſed to influence every perſon in any degree dependent on our adverſaries, yet final ſucceſs in the County Election, I think, may be depended on. Lord John * is in great danger

* Lord John Cavendiſh.

of

of being thrown out of this City; and a report has juſt reached this place, that the Devonſhire Nomination at Knareſbrough, by ſome ſtrange fortuitous concurrence of circumſtances, has been defeated, and Sir John Coghill and Mr. Bacon Frank have been returned for that place. However, I think it probable there is ſome miſtake in this report. The Subſcription † for ſupporting the Election amounts to more than 20,000l. excluſive of what may have been ſubſcribed in London.

I am, Sir, with moſt ſincere reſpect,
Your faithful and obedient ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

† This Subſcription was intended to defray the unavoidable expence, as the Law now ſtands, of a conteſted Election for the County of York; an expence by far too great for the purſe of any candidate, however opulent. The magnitude of the legal expence at conteſted Elections for counties or great towns aggravates the evil conſequences of the defects in our Repreſentation, by diſabling the ſound parts of the Conſtituent Body duly to exerciſe their important Right of Election. It is a regulation of the firſt neceſſity, that ſuch expence at conteſted Elections be prevented, whether our Repreſentation be amended, or be ſuffered to remain in its preſent groſsly defective ſtate.

N. B. Mr. Pitt's Letter to the Editor, dated March 30th, 1784, to which the preceding Letter is an anſwer, is not produced, becauſe the Letter and its Cover are both indorſed by Mr. Pitt, "Private."—For a ſimilar reaſon, Mr. Pitt's anſwer to the preceding letter, dated April 6, 1784, is ſuppreſſed.—For nearly the ſame reaſon, ſome of Sir G. Savile's Letters to the Editor were before deemed inadmiſſible, when he was forming the Collection of Political Papers lately publiſhed.

It ſeems not improper here to ſtate, that not one of the other papers written by Mr. Pitt, and contained in this publication, is indorſed by him, "Private;" as the two Letters are indorſed, which are ſuppreſſed.

Paper VI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Jan.* 20, 1785.

Dear Sir,

THE Newſpapers abound with malevolent paragraphs on the ſubject of your intention to ſupport the Reform of our Repreſentation, *as a Miniſter*; * a ſpecimen of which I incloſe for your peruſal, together with my reply to it, and, alſo, my reply to other paragraphs of the ſame tendency, which have appeared in a different paper.

I do aſſure you, that I am perfectly ſatisfied every thing is rightly underſtood between us.

* If any of the Replies to the malevolent paragraphs, here alluded to, had been preſerved, they would not have been withheſa from the Reader. The Circular Letter, which the Editor addreſſed to the Friends of Political Reformation throughout Great Britain, announcing Mr. Pitt's intention to ſupport their Cauſe, *as a Miniſter and a Man*, was written with Mr. Pitt's conſent, th the Editor's requeſt, with a view to animate them, and obtain teld general ſupport of the People, in County Meetings, &c.: And from Mr. Pitt's compliance with this requeſt, as well as from other parts of his conduct, the ſincerity of his attachment to the cauſe of Reformation, *at this time*, ſeems to be unqueſtionable. It is due to Mr. Pitt to add, that when this Circular Letter became, ſoon after the date of it, the ſubject of animadverſion in Parliament, and was there treated by ſome as an unauthorized Letter, and conſidered by others as a Letter authentic indeed, but conceived in very exceptionable Terms, Mr. Pitt did Mr. Wyvill ample juſtice, declaring, that the Letter was written with his conſent; and though not dictated by him, truly and well expreſſed what he meant to have ſaid.

You

You have placed in me a * Truſt of the greateſt conſequence; and I am conſcious of having acted in it with fidelity, to the beſt of my judgment. On the other hand, I have acted thus, without a ſingle ſcrap of paper, or written authority of any kind. This is, I confeſs, a ſlender return for your confidence in me; but it was the beſt return in my power. I have only to add upon this ſubject, that I wiſh to have no written anſwer to this Note; I never wanted it before, nor do I now deſire it. If I had it in my power to expreſs a more full reliance, I would.

The other incloſed Papers are copies of my earlieſt Letters, on the ſubject of our converſation, to Mr. Maſon, Mr. Tooker, and Mr. Wilkinſon; † that to Lord Effingham I have not yet obtained.

Believe me ever, dear Sir,
With the higheſt regard,
Moſt faithfully your's,
C. WYVILL.

* The Truſt here alluded to, was the authority verbally given to Mr. Wyvill by Mr. Pitt, to communicate to the Friends of Reformation, as widely as poſſible, his intention to promote their Cauſe to the utmoſt extent of his power; and to invite their aſſiſtance by Petitions at General Meetings, &c. Copies of the moſt material Letters which had been written by the Editor, on this ſubject, were at this time ſeen and approved by Mr. Pitt.

The Paper, intitled, "Heads of a Bill or Bills for amending the Repreſentation," was intruſted with Mr. Wyvill, probably, ſoon after this time; but of the day when it was delivered to him, he has found no mention.

† For a Copy of the Letter to Mr. Wilkinſon, here alluded to, and for Copies of ſome other Letters on the ſame ſubject, ſee the Appendix.

Paper VII.

Letter *from the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Monday (ſuppoſed to be Monday the 24th of January, 1785.)

My dear Sir,

ON reconſidering the ſubject on which I had the pleaſure of converſing with you, I ſee no reaſon to vary the opinion in which we then agreed as to the propriety of a Meeting.*

Believe me, dear Sir,

Faithfully and ſincerely your's,

W. PITT.

* The Meeting alluded to in this Letter was that Meeting of the County of York which was held on Thurſday the 10th of February, 1785, in order to give their unanimous ſupport to Mr. Pitt's intended Motion in Parliament, for effecting a Reform in the Repreſentation. The Circular Letter mentioned in the firſt note annexed to Paper VI. had inclined the major part of the Yorkſhire Committee to aſſemble the County for this purpoſe: ſome, however, of the moſt reſpectable Members of the Committee, whoſe attachment to the cauſe of Reformation was undoubted, were averſe from the meaſure, fearing that the appearance of diminiſhed zeal might injure the cauſe, if the propoſed Meeting ſhould be leſs numerouſly attended than ſimilar Meetings had been attended before. From this Letter it may be collected, that after due deliberation, Mr. Pitt gave the ſanction of his decided approbation to the meaſure of a County Meeting. The Circular Letter had been agreed to, with a view to obtain, if poſſible, a Declaration from the Collective Body of the People in favour of the intended Reform. Under the circumſtances which have been ſtated, Mr. Pitt's perſeverance to act in purſuance of the plan laid down, affords another proof of his ſincere attachment, *at this time*, to the cauſe of Reformation.

Paper VIII.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Feb.* 2, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I Beg leave, for a moment, to interrupt you, juſt to ſay, that on Saturday next, at an early hour, I ſhall ſet out for York; and to remind you, that ſome points of real importance, reſpecting the Yorkſhire Meeting, are yet unarranged. I have no doubt of our ſuperiority there; but I believe you agree with me in thinking, it is very much the intereſt of the Common Cauſe to render that ſuperiority as great and deciſive as poſſible.

I am, dear Sir,

With the higheſt reſpect and regard,

Your faithful humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IX.

Letter *from the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, *Feb.* 16*th*, 1785.

My dear Sir,

I HAVE but one moment, of which, however, I cannot omit making uſe, to return you many thanks for your * Two Letters, and to congratulate you on the ſucceſs which has ſo amply juſtified your expectation. I truſt this happy example will have a powerful and general effect.

I am, with great truth and regard,
Dear Sir,
Your moſt faithful and obedient
W. PITT.

* Copies of the two Letters here alluded to have not been preſerved. They probably contained a particular account of proceedings at a previous Meeting on the 9th of February, and at the General Meeting of the County of York on the 10th of February, 1785. On this occaſion, the expectation of general ſupport throughout the kingdom, formed by the Miniſter and his Friends, were unfortunately diſappointed; the laudable example of the County of York was not followed with vigour by the reſt of the nation; few Petitions were preſented to Parliament; the zeal, tranſcendent abilities, and influence of Mr. Pitt, were unable, without a ſtrong concurrence of the people, to check the habitual tendency of the ſyſtem; ill ſupported by them, his mild and prudent propoſal of Reformation neceſſarily fell to the ground.

Paper X.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Feb.* 28*th*, 1785.

Dear Sir,

WHEN I lately mentioned the money accumulated in the hands of the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, as a ſum that on certain conditions might be juſtly applied to the ſervice of the State, you ſeemed to think the ſubject deſerved farther conſideration. The incloſed Propoſal * is the reſult of what has occurred to me; and, without pretending to any financial ſkill, I ſhall much rejoice, if you find it capable of being turned to any ſerviceable purpoſe.

I am ever, with the greateſt regard,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt faithful humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

* The Memorial at page 20 contains this Propoſal.

Paper XI.

MEMORIAL *reſpecting* certain Sums of Money *veſted in the* Governors *of* Queen Anne's Bounty; *and the* Conditions *on which the ſaid* Sums *ſeem juſtly applicable to the* Public Service.

IT is underſtood, that the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty are poſſeſſed of one conſiderable ſum of money veſted in their names, or in truſt to them, though appropriated to augment certain ſmall benefices in England and Wales. For this ſum, intereſt not exceeding 2 per cent. is annually paid to the ſeveral incumbents of thoſe benefices, according to their reſpective appropriated ſhares. It is alſo underſtood, that another large ſum is veſted in the ſaid Governors, which is wholly unappropriated. The total accumulation of theſe monies, appropriated and unappropriated, may be taken to amount to 500,000l.

The excuſe which is alledged for this accumulation is, the extreme difficulty of finding purchaſable Lands of the exact value wanted, and perfectly unexceptionable in title, and every other reſpect. As 2 per cent. has been the annual allowance of intereſt for ſuch ſums as have been allotted to certain poor benefices, until eſtates could be purchaſed, and annexed to each benefice; and as few ſuch purchaſes have been made even during the laſt ten years, in which the price of land has been uncommonly low, and conſequently the incumbents of ſuch poor benefices were intereſted in a more

more than uſual degree to find proper eſtates to be purchaſed with their reſpective allotments, the excuſe alledged ſeems to be a fair and ſufficient exculpation of the perſons concerned in this truſt.

But the validity of their plea proves, that, under the preſent regulations, accumulation will be continued, and the relief of the poorer Clergy, the immediate purpoſe of this benevolent Donation, will be much retarded, or rather, in many inſtances, will be entirely defeated. It appears, therefore, to be not only juſt and equitable, but neceſſary for the due accompliſhment of the augmentation intended by Queen Anne, that Parliament ſhould interpoſe, to direct an application of the ſaid fund in ſome more ſpeedy and effectual mode, to that charitable purpoſe.

This being admitted to be proper, it is propoſed, that Government ſhall apply to Parliament for an Act, ordaining that the abovementioned accumulation of money, ſuppoſed to amount to 500,000l. ſhall be paid into the Exchequer at Midſummer next, on the conditions following, to wit:

1. That from the date of ſuch transfer to the State, the Public Faith ſhall be engaged to pay the intereſt to become due for all appropriated ſums as aforeſaid, part of the ſaid 500,000l. at the rate of 2 per cent. per ann. till Michaelmas next, and from Michaelmas, for ever, at the rate of 5 per cent. per ann.

2. That returns of all the benefices in England and Wales, under 50l. per ann, ſhall be

exhibited to Parliament within twenty days after the commencement of the next Seſſion, in order that intereſt at the rate of 5 per cent. per ann. for the unappropriated ſum, being the reſidue of the ſaid 500,000l. may be diſtributed in ſuch manner as Parliament ſhall appoint for the augmentation of the ſaid benefices.

3. That the payment of Firſt-fruits and Tenths ſhall be continued for the farther augmentation of the ſaid benefices, *in this mode, annually*, until the income of every benefice ſhall have been augmented to 50l. per ann. and no more. And when no benefice under 50l. a year ſhall be left in England and Wales, the payment of Firſt-fruits and Tenths ſhall be then diſcontinued, and wholly extinguiſhed.

4. Laſtly, that a clauſe ſhall be added to every future Land-tax Act, directing the Receivers-General of the Land-tax in England and Wales, out of the monies collected by virtue of ſuch Act, by half yearly payments, and without fee or deduction whatſoever, to pay the ſums thus appropriated by Parliament to the incumbents of the ſeveral augmented benefices within their reſpective diſtricts; or otherwiſe, to cauſe the ſaid ſums to be paid by ſuch Collectors of the Land-tax within their reſpective diſtricts, as may reſide neareſt to the place of reſidence of the ſaid incumbents.*

C. WYVILL.

London, Feb. 26th, 1785.

Paper XII.

* If the appropriation of the ſum of money mentioned in this Memorial had taken place on the terms propoſed, the State would have been accommodated with the loan of it on eaſy intereſt, and a great

Paper XII.

Note *from the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

MR. Pitt preſents his compliments to Mr. Wyvill, and if he is diſengaged at nine on Friday morning, would be much obliged to him if he would take his Breakfaſt in Downing-ſtreet, as Mr. Pitt wiſhes much for the honour of ſeeing him * previous to Monday.

DOWNING-STREET, *Wedneſday, April* 13*th.*

a great number of the inferior Clergymen of the Church of England, who are at once the moſt neceſſitous and the moſt laborious Members of that Body, would have received a comfortable addition to their ſlender incomes. If the ſum in queſtion be veſted entirely in the 3 per cent. Fund, it would have afforded an immediate increaſe of 15*l.* a year to at leaſt one thouſand of the moſt indigent of our parochial Prieſts; It would have afforded more if veſted in the other Funds; and the ſums raiſed in future by the operation of Queen Anne's Bounty, inſtead of being ſuffered again to accumulate into a large and uſeleſs maſs, would have been applied as ſpeedily as they poſſibly could be, to the relief of the remaining poor Pariſh Prieſts of the Church of England, till at laſt, after the object of the Queen's Bounty had been fully attained, the taxes of Firſt-fruits and Tenths, often found by the beneficed Clergy to be very inconvenient and burthenſome, would have been diſcontinued. If the principles of this propoſal ſhould be approved, the time may come, it even ſeems to be at no very great diſtance, when the application of them may afford a ſupply neither inconſiderable nor unſeaſonable to the exigencies of the State.

* The object of this interview was farther conſultation on the intended Motion for a Reform in the Repreſentation, previous to the day fixed for making it, viz. Monday, April 18th, 1785.

Paper XIII.

Letter *from the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, *May 7th*, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I Flatter myſelf the Queen Anne's Bounty may be made uſeful to the Public Service, but I think it need not come as part of the Budget; which makes it unneceſſary for me to trouble you immediately.

I ſhall be extremely happy to ſee you when the buſineſs of the preſent moment is a little over. I am, dear Sir,

Your moſt faithful and obedient ſervant,

W. PITT.

Paper XIV.

Letter *from the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

PUTNEY-HEATH, *May 29th*, 1785.

Dear Sir,

BUSINESS which I muſt diſpatch before to-morrow, has obliged me, contrary to my intention, to ſtay here to-day. I cannot eaſily be

be in Town ſooner than half paſt twelve to-morrow, and ſhould be very glad to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you then in Downing-ſtreet, if it is not inconvenient to you. But if the time of your ſetting out makes an early hour of conſequence, I will endeavour to meet you as much ſooner as you pleaſe. *

I am, dear Sir,

Very ſincerely your's,

W. PITT.

* At this time Mr. Wyvill was on the point of paſſing over to the Continent, on an excurſion through Paris to the Glacieres of Savoy and Switzerland. Having been kindly furniſhed by Viſcount Mahon with a Letter of Introduction to Dr. Franklin, Mr. Wyvill wiſhed to inform Mr. Pitt of this circumſtance, and to offer his ſervice, if he could be of any, during his intended ſhort reſidence at Paris. On his arrival in that capital, Mr. Wyvill haſtened to pay his reſpects to the venerable Ambaſſador of America; by whom he was received with every mark of cordial civility and good-will. In repeated converſations with Mr. Wyvill, Dr. Franklin expreſſed his own amicable diſpoſition to Great-Britain; and his earneſt wiſh that the recent reconciliation between this country and America might be improved into the cloſeſt friendſhip and union, by the prudence, moderation, and good faith of their reſpective Governments.

Paper XV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

BURTON-HALL, *December 11th*, 1785.

Dear Sir,

MY Father has informed me that a Petition has lately been tranſmitted by him to the Board of Treaſury, requeſting that a Penſion, which he has enjoyed ſeveral years, may by their authority be continued; without which allowance, the Board of Exciſe in Scotland have intimated their intention to diſcontinue it, as inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of the preſent Adminiſtration.

On this occaſion I ſhould diſapprove my own conduct, if I remained ſilent; becauſe I think it extremely probable, from the regard with which you have honoured me ſo much, that you may feel ſome difficulty, ſome degree of reluctance, to enforce, in the preſent inſtance, thoſe frugal maxims of Government, which you have laid down, with the ſame ſtrictneſs as you would carry them into execution in ordinary caſes. Permit me, therefore, to aſſure you, that it is my earneſt and only wiſh, that you will put me and my connection with the Petitioner entirely out of your conſideration, and treat him exactly as you would treat every other perſon in the ſame predicament. If the circumſtances of his caſe do not juſtify the penſion as an indulgence

gence merited by ſervice, unobjectionable in point of precedent, and fit to be allowed in all ſimilar ſituations, it ought to be ſtruck off, and I ſhall applaud the hand which does reſcind it, with as much ſincerity, and with as much alacrity too, as if the perſon afflicted by the ſtroke were altogether unknown to me. I ſay this not from indifference to ſo near a relation, becauſe I mean to compenſate his loſs, as I had before promiſed I would, when, from the part I took in promoting a Petition to Parliament againſt unmerited Penſions, &c. it was not improbable *his* might be diſallowed by the Miniſter then, for reaſons very different from thoſe which I am certain will determine your reſolution now. In preſſing you to put me quite out of the queſtion, and to act according to your impartial judgment alone, I do what I conceive to be my duty; and I ſhould ill deſerve your regard and good opinion, which I value ſo highly, if I could entertain a wiſh for a ſingle moment, that, on my account, you would depart from thoſe general rules of œconomy, which are, in the preſent exhauſted ſtate of our country, indiſpenſably neceſſary.

I am, dear Sir,
With the greateſt reſpect and regard,
Moſt faithfully your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper XVI.

Paper XVI.

Letter *from the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

HOLWOOD-HILL, *Jan. 8th*, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I Meant to have acknowledged immediately the favor of your Letter, and am extremely concerned that in the variety of buſineſs it has from time to time eſcaped me. The ſentiments you expreſs are ſuch as, from knowing your character and principle, I cannot be ſurpriſed at. It would, I confeſs, have given me great pain, if a perſon ſo nearly connected with you had been a ſufferer by any ſyſtem laid down by the preſent Government, however unavoidable. I have, therefore, peculiar pleaſure in being able to aſſure you, that, before I received your letter, or knew that Mr. Wyvill had any connection with you, the ſimple circumſtances of the caſe had determined me to ſend directions to the Commiſſioners of the Exciſe in Scotland to continue his Penſion, as being clearly not within the line of a juſt and rational reduction.—I hope your health has benefited by your ſummer exertions. *

Believe me to be at all times,
My dear Sir,
With the greateſt regard,
Moſt faithfully your's,
W. PITT.

* N. B. This is the laſt Letter received by Mr. Wyvill from Mr. Pitt.

Paper XVII.

Paper XVII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan. 11th*, 1787.

Dear Sir,

MR. Wilberforce having lately expreſſed his intention to reſume, in the next Seſſion of Parliament, the ſubject of a County Regiſter, with ſome modification of Lord Stanhope's Plan;* and having yet formed no decided opinion what that modification ought to be, I have thrown together ſome thoughts upon it, which are communicated to him by this poſt; and I alſo venture to trouble you with a copy, though not without much heſitation, conſidering the near approach of your buſieſt ſeaſon. I am aware how imperfect a

* The principle of the modified Plan here alluded to, is, to employ the Conſtable to form, annually, a Liſt of the Freeholders within his townſhip who are qualified to vote at Elections, for the County, as he is at preſent employed to form a Liſt of Freeholders qualified to ſerve as Jurors. Were the County Electors thus aſcertained, a great reduction of expence at Elections for the Counties might be effected: the poll might be taken at the chief place of every Hundred, or in every Pariſh, which would be ſtill better.—Whether this idea was or was not approved by Mr. Pitt, is not certainly known to the Editor, by whom *no anſwer was received* to his Letter. Mr. Wilberforce approved and adopted the plan ſuggeſted, and placed it in the hands of the Editor's Friend, John Baynes Eſq; a young Lawyer of the greateſt expectation, to be drawn by him in a technical form; but before he had drawn the Bill, Mr. Baynes died. After his lamented death, the plan was ſaid to be communicated to A. Luders, Eſq; for the ſame purpoſe; but before he was able to finiſh this taſk, the death of Mr. Phillips, the intended mover of the Bill, and the growing indiſpoſition of the Houſe of Commons to every queſtion of Reform, diſconcerted and finally defeated the deſign.

ſketch

ſketch I now ſubmit to your perſual; but if the propoſed alteration in the paper incloſed ſhould fortunately meet your opinion, and Mr. Wilberforce and Lord Stanhope ſhould be content to admit the modification, I think, when properly corrected, it might probably paſs both the Houſes of Parliament with leſs oppoſition than his Lordſhip's Plan experienced the laſt year, as it is ſomewhat leſs complicated, and ſomewhat leſs remote from the common practice.—The only material objection which has occurred to myſelf, or thoſe I have been able to conſult, is, that the Conſtable might abuſe his power. In times of tranquillity, I am perſuaded, this would rarely happen; never, perhaps, to any dangerous extent. In times of much political agitation, if ſome ſhould be intereſted to tempt the Conſtable to tranſgreſs, others would be found equally intereſted to watch, and to detect the fraud.—No Schedule accompanies the Plan, though often referred to in it. In moſt of thoſe references, the regulations in Lord Stanhope's Schedule are what I had in view: But if the general idea ſhould have your approbation, the Schedule, I ſuppoſe, would be eaſily compleated.

It is with great pleaſure I take this opportunity to aſſure you, that your relaxation * of the

* By this relaxation, farmers renting leſs than 70 pounds a year were exempted from paying the Horſe-tax. This exemption was propoſed to Mr. Pitt at an official interview by the Editor, with the concurrence of Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Wilberforce.—The Secretaries objected the precarious ſtate of the Revenue, which at that

the Horſe-tax laſt year has been received in this country with that univerſal ſatisfaction and gratitude, which an indulgence in itſelf ſo great, and granted at a time ſo critical to your reputation as a Miniſter, ſo well deſerved.

I am, with the higheſt regard,
Dear Sir,
Your moſt faithful
and obedient ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper XVIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

BURTON-HALL, *July 29th*, 1787.

Dear Sir,

* WHEN your Propoſitions for reforming our Repreſentation were offered to the Houſe of Commons, the diſtreſsful conſequences of the War with America were yet felt

that time could ill bear ſo conſiderable a defalcation. But the propriety of relieving the pooreſt claſs of cultivators from a burthen that ought only to fall on the rich proprietors of horſes uſed for luxury, prevailed with Mr. Pitt, and the deſired indulgence was granted.—Mr. Wyvill ſtates this circumſtance with pleaſure; it does credit to the financial principles and courage of Mr. Pitt.

* Two winters had paſſed after the laſt motion made by Mr. Pitt for amending our Repreſentation, and yet his expected Bill was not produced. Whether this delay ought to be imputed to caution or inadvertence, to a preſs of official buſineſs, or a naſcent change in the Miniſter's ſyſtem about this time, it is not eaſy to determine. But it is certain the delay much exceeded the time within which the appearance of the Bill was looked for by the Friends

felt ſeverely by the nation; and the corruption of Parliament, under a former Miniſter, was yet conſidered, with general deteſtation, as the principal cauſe of thoſe misfortunes. But the adoption of your whole ſyſtem ſeems to be reſerved for ſome period of ſtill greater diſtreſs, when the abuſes of corruption ſhall have been more ruinouſly practiſed, and ſhall have rendered the change more evidently and more indiſpenſably neceſſary. For, even at that time, the majority of the people, as well as of the Houſe of Commons, appears to have been adverſe to your propoſal; not, probably, from any fixed diſapprobation of the Plan itſelf, but becauſe the Peace had already leſſened in ſome degree the preſſure of calamity, and the proſpect of happier times had produced a diſpoſition to acquieſce. Since the rejection of

Friends of Reformation. The ſincerity of their Leader, however, was not then ſuſpected by the Editor; though he thought it his duty to remind Mr. Pitt, that the publication of his Bill was expected. Some peculiar circumſtances relative to a Borough, dependent on the Board of Ordnance, ſeemed to preſent a favourable opportunity for its Publication at that time. But to the Editor's Letter ſtating theſe conſiderations to Mr. Pitt, with the accuſtomed freedom of their former intercourſe, yet with all becoming deference and friendly zeal for the honour of his character, *no anſwer was returned.*

Some ſurpriſe, and ſome ſlight jealouſies, were the natural conſequence of this ſilence; but they ſoon yielded to the ſtrong prepoſſeſſion in Mr. Pitt's favour. Within a few years after this period, however, the original principles of his adminiſtration ſeemed to have been abandoned, and a ſyſtem leſs pure, leſs œconomical, leſs friendly to popular rights, began to be gradually unfolded. But confidence once given, frankly and ſincerely, is ſlowly and reluctantly withdrawn; and it was not till many years after the date of this Letter that the Editor was at laſt convinced, by the tenor of Mr. Pitt's conduct, that he was become unfaithful to the cauſe in which he had engaged himſelf.

that

that motion, the proſperity of the country has been advanced with a rapidity beyond all expectation; Trade has increaſed, Stocks have riſen, the Finances have been reduced into good order, and Government has been ſteadily conducted on the principles of virtuous œconomy. In its eagerneſs to enjoy theſe bleſſings, the nation forgets their precarious tenure; and as the benefits of your Adminiſtration are more extenſively experienced, it ſeems more generally diſinclined to any great Parliamentary change, though recommended even by your authority.

In this ſtate of affairs, and in this temper of the nation, I truſt there is not a Zealot ſo raſh and intemperate in his purſuit of Political Reformation, as to wiſh you to agitate that ſubject again in Parliament. Be that, however, as it may, I certainly have not the ſmalleſt intention to trouble you with any ſuch unſeaſonable ſuggeſtions. I only beg leave to recall to your remembrance a meaſure which I ventured to propoſe juſt after the loſs of your great queſtion. You then expreſſed your approbation of the idea, that an authentic publication of your intended Bill was due to the Public, and to your own character. At that juncture, it was neither neceſſary, nor indeed prudent, to carry this meaſure into immediate execution. All the information on the ſubject which could at that time be given with propriety, was communicated to the Public in the Summary Explanation of its principles, which I had the ho-

nour to publiſh with your permiſſion.* But, as your other important plans for the good of your Country had not yet received their diſcuſſion and deciſion, the publication of the Bill in queſtion was very properly poſtponed, till you had leiſure to reconſider the ſtate of our Repreſentation, and to correct your draught with that care and accuracy which the extreme importance of the ſubject demands.

* This paſſage alludes to a fact which at the date of this Letter was recent, and all the material circumſtances of which were undoubtedly freſh in the recollection of Mr. Pitt. Hence the brevity of the expreſſion, which renders the meaning ſomewhat obſcure. The fact alluded to was this: the Summary Explanation was written with Mr. Pitt's previous aſſent, in order to be laid before the Meeting at the Thatched Houſe on the 24th of May, 1785, as the ground on which they might proceed to the conſideration of the merits of his plan: And Mr. Pitt's aſſent had been given expreſsly on condition that the piece ſhould contain no alluſion to the Heads of his Bill. The Summary Explanation was written in conformity with this condition; it was ſeen by Mr. Pitt, and he gave Mr. Wyvill his permiſſion to publiſh it, to lay it before the Meeting, and to declare that Mr. Pitt acknowledged the Explanation to be an accurate account of the principles of that ſyſtem of Reform which he had recommended to Parliament on the 18th of April, 1785. Concerning the Paper intitled Heads of a Bill, or Bills, for amending the Repreſentation, it may be proper here to obſerve, that,

1. The Heads, &c. were delivered to Mr. Wyvill by Mr. Pitt, ſome time before the 18th of April, 1785, without any condition or reſerve at the time expreſſed or underſtood.

2. That in May, 1785, Mr. Pitt, for reaſons of a temporary nature, required, and Mr. Wyvill promiſed, that there ſhould be no alluſion to the Heads, &c. in the Summary Explanation.

3. That the promiſe was *literally* fulfilled, by the omiſſion of any alluſion to the Heads in the Summary Explanation; and *in ſpirit*, by the Editor's ſilence upon the ſubject till the year 1793, when the circumſtances which rendered that reſerve neceſſary had long ceaſed to exiſt.

4. That no promiſe of ſecrecy, or reſerve of any kind, was required by Mr. Pitt, or agreed to by Mr. Wyvill, reſpecting any other Papers which paſſed between them, except only the two Letters indorſed *Private*, which are not intended for publication.

Whether

Whether the moment of leiſure be now arrived, or be ſtill at ſome diſtance, is more than I pretend to judge; yet, if the commotions in Holland, which have threatened to embroil us with that Province and with France, ſhould be fortunately compoſed by your prudence and firmneſs, it is poſſible that the preſent receſs may afford the opportunity which is wanted to prepare ſuch a Bill for publication.

In my thoughts, there are various perſonal and public motives for the execution of this meaſure during your continuance in power; and to narrow the idea ſtill more, during the exiſtence of the preſent Parliament; and even, if poſſible, during its preſent receſs.

It is not improbable, that, in the courſe of your life, the revolution of human affairs may bring round ſome favourable ſeaſon for the radical correction of abuſes in our Parliamentary Repreſentation. At that critical conjuncture, great will be the advantage reſulting from a previous publication of your Bill; when the then exiſting ſtate of the country could not have been foreſeen, and when no private intereſt could be aſſigned as the motive for your having reſumed the ſubject. The value of this advantage, perhaps, is not much over-rated, by ſuppoſing that the poſſibility of *your* ſucceſs would depend more upon it, than on any other circumſtance which can be reaſonably imagined.

But if the ſeaſon for accompliſhing a Reformation of Parliament ſhould be more remote

than I have here ſuppoſed, yet, whenever it ſhall arrive, the worthy Patriots of that day will undoubtedly feel and acknowledge the immenſe advantage of having had your ſyſtem laid before them. To your previous labours, poſterity will be chiefly indebted for that additional ſecurity to Public Liberty which may be then acquired. For let us ſuppoſe Lord Chatham to have formed, and ſubmitted to Parliament and to the Public, the plan which you afterwards propoſed: The conſequence would probably have been, that the diſſentions among the various advocates of Reformation, to which their late defeat may be truly imputed, either would not have broken out, or would have been ſoon compoſed by his ſuperior authority. But if union had been thus effected, your taſk would have been far leſs arduous than it actually was; and your efforts, in all human probability, would have been crowned with ſucceſs. From the publication of this Bill by you, ſimilar advantages may be expected hereafter; and, I truſt, poſterity will bow to your authority with equal reſpect.*

But theſe benefits, to be reaped in a more or leſs diſtant futurity, are not the only arguments

* At preſent this may appear a hyperbolical compliment; but when written, it was the honeſt expreſſion of the Editor's real ſentiments. In the early part of his Adminiſtration, much had been wiſely and bravely done by Mr. Pitt to repair our ſhattered finances, and to reſtore œconomy and integrity in the expenditure of the public money; and it was then expected by many of his Friends, that to complete our internal ſecurity, by an effectual Reformation of Parliament, would be the grand object of his political life. He began it as his father had begun *his*, a Foe to Corruption, a Friend to

ments which recommend the production of your Bill. I think I ſee ſeveral good conſequences that would immediately flow from that meaſure. If the Bill, with the Schedule annexed, ſhould appear next winter, or before the next general election, that advantage might probably be derived from it which I took the liberty to ſtate to you, ſoon after the attempt made by Mr. Marſham to disfranchiſe Queenborough. The idea ſeemed to meet your entire approbation; but the attack upon that borough not having been renewed, no opportunity has yet occurred to make the propoſed experiment. What I mean to ſuggeſt is this: the magnitude of your plan was, perhaps, in the minds of the major part of your opponents, their principal objection; and yet the very ſame perſons who rejected the whole ſyſtem, may be induced to promote its eſtabliſhment in detail. For, after the next general election, ſhould any borough, convicted of Corruption, appear to deſerve disfranchiſement, it is highly probable that by your influence the guilty borough might be puniſhed; not, as in the caſes of Shoreham and Cricklade, by imparting the right of voting there to the Freeholders of the Hundred, which is a clumſy regulation, and inapplicable to any great ſyſtematical improvement; but

to the Rights of the People: Had he, like him, perſevered to the end, in his firſt attachment to the one, and his hereditary hatred to the other, he would have equalled his father in true glory: he would have ſurpaſſed him, had he with the ſame ſteadfaſtneſs adhered to his original ſyſtem of pacific policy, and like Waſhington preſerved his country from the calamities of a war with France.

by imparting the juſtly-forfeited franchiſe to thoſe great towns and diſtricts which are wholly unrepreſented, or repreſented with the greateſt inadequacy. If this rule of transferring the forfeited franchiſe ſhould then be adopted at your recommendation, it would follow of courſe, that the order of transfers, previouſly publiſhed in your Schedule, would alſo be adopted. And after this rule of transfer had taken place in a few inſtances, the unſatisfied diſtricts contained in the Schedule would acquire a ſpecies of right, or equitable claim, that the order of the Schedule ſhould continue to be obſerved in all future transfers of the right of Repreſentation.—And this would ſecure the gradual execution of a principal part of your plan, and would alſo tend directly to promote the accompliſhment of the reſt.

In a perſonal view, I am perſuaded that this publication will be advantageous to your character. It will be conſidered as a fair and candid proceeding; it will prove that your propoſitions had been weighed very maturely; it will exhibit a ſyſtem of Repreſentation the beſt adapted to the ſtate of the country and its future fluctuations of property of all which hitherto have been propoſed; and, finally, it will leave thoſe opponents, who from the mean motives of intereſt or reſentment, do injuſtice to the rectitude of your conduct, no ground whatever, in the whole courſe of this buſineſs, for any plauſible imputation.

It may be objected to the propoſed publication of your Bill, that it might, perhaps, afford occaſion

occaſion for invidious and malignant reflections. I ſuppoſe the objection poſſible, without perceiving its force; but, on the contrary, ſhould the meaſure be wholly laid aſide, or only delayed till your retreat from office, or till the return of great national diſtreſs, I conceive in each of theſe caſes your conduct might be open to cenſure. I am aware that this publication is not exactly the meaſure which ſome of your friends would either recommend or approve; yet, if it be well calculated to ſupport your character with the Public, as I think it is, it would hardly leſſen your weight even with thoſe aſſociates whoſe ſentiments on the ſubject may be different from your own. *

* From the date of this Letter to the month of February 1793, the Editor's Correſpondence with Mr. Pitt was interrupted, but the connection was yet unbroken. During the earlier part of this period, the general tenor of his adminiſtration continued to meet the Editor's approbation and applauſe. In the ſecure and unſuſpecting temper of the nation, then lulled by Peace, no radical cure for a diſordered Conſtitution could be applied with ſucceſs, or attempted with prudence. The groſſeſt abuſes and defects ſtill remained in the ſyſtem of Repreſentation, and their tendency was ſtill as pernicious as ever; but that tendency was checked by the neceſſities of the State, and the influence of popular opinion. The Editor, with the reſt of his countrymen, enjoyed the riſing proſperity of England; and was content with them to acquieſce under great exiſting evils, thus mitigated by the economical ſpirit of the times, and the prudence of Adminiſtration. He truſted that the rights ſtill left to the people were ſafe under the protection of a Patriot Miniſter, and that no favourable opportunity would be loſt by Mr. Pitt, to fortify and ſecure the genuine principles of the Conſtitution.

Theſe flattering hopes were the beſt conſolation of a few years; but in the latter part of the period alluded to, the proſpect began to change, and a train of meaſures, dark and threatening in their appearance, ſhot acroſs the political horizon, and threw a gloom over the country, which has become deeper and darker with every ſucceeding year. The Editor's ſuſpicions were now renewed with increaſing

But it is time for me to ſtop; I am conſcious my zeal has led me to the edge of impropriety; yet I cannot reſolve to cancel what I have written, becauſe I am alſo conſcious my motives for uſing this freedom are equally right to you and to the Public; and therefore, in that view, they are ſure to meet your candid acceptance.

I have only to add, that if you ſhould reſolve to publiſh your Bill, and ſhould wiſh previouſly to ſee me, I will moſt chearfully obey your commands, and come up to London at any time which may beſt ſuit your convenience.

I am, dear Sir,

With very great reſpect and regard,

Your's moſt faithfully,

C. WYVILL.

increaſing force; he grew more and more alarmed: he plainly ſaw greater and greater reaſon for it. At laſt, in the beginning of February 1793, the violent ſteps which had been taken, apparently with a deſign to diſgrace and ruin the whole body of Reformers, and engage this country in a raſh and unneceſſary war with France, induced the Editor to addreſs an expoſtulatory Letter to Mr. Pitt on theſe ſubjects.

The Letter was privately ſent to him in February 1793; like the two preceding Letters, *it remained unanſwered*, and in the courſe of a few weeks it was publiſhed. Had Mr. Pitt deigned to return a ſatisfactory anſwer reſpecting the matters diſcuſſed in it, the Editor's intention was not to publiſh it. But his ſilence, combined with the facts alluded to, appeared, in his judgment, to form a ſtrong preſumptive proof that Mr. Pitt had abandoned the liberal and pacific principles of policy which had rendered the early part of his adminiſtration happy and popular, and had adopted a new and dangerous ſyſtem of FOREIGN WAR and INTERNAL COERCION. Under this perſuaſion, Mr. Wyvill thought it an indiſpenſible duty to renounce his connection with Mr. Pitt, and to lay this expoſtulatory Letter before the public.—It ſeems unneceſſary to republiſh it here.

Paper XIX.

Extract * *of a* Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* W. Wilberforce, Esq.

Burton-Hall, *March 7th*, 1793.

My dear Sir,

IN my intercourſe with Mr. Pitt, many things were imparted to me confidentially, and in no circumſtances whatever ſhall I think myſelf authorized to divulge any part of theſe communications, without his previous conſent. But whatever at any time has been communicated to me reſpecting the public buſineſs of the Aſſociation, by Mr. Pitt, by Lord Lanſdown, or by Lord Rockingham, I have not thought ſuch communications from men in their miniſterial ſtations, whether made in writing or in converſation, were private communications to me individually (when ſecrecy was not at that time enjoined) but as communications of a public nature, made to me in my official capacity, as Chairman of the Yorkſhire Committee. Of ſuch communications, in all caſes, whether made in writing or in converſation, I held myſelf bound to give an account to the Committee: Papers

* This Extract is placed in the ſeries of papers which paſſed between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wyvill, becauſe, though it is taken from a Letter addreſſed to Mr. Wilberforce, that Letter was intended to be ſhewn to Mr. Pitt, contained an offer to him, and was actually put into his hands by Mr. Wilberforce. This appears from Mr. Wilberforce's Letter to Mr. Wyvill, dated the 30th of July, 1793; and from the ſame Letter it alſo appears, that Mr. Pitt returned it to Mr. Wilberforce "*with no anſwer.*"

thus

thus communicated I conſidered as public papers, and myſelf bound in reſpect of them to act as the Truſtee of the Committee and of the Public. This is the light in which I conſidered Lord Lanſdown's Letters * to me about ten years ago: He underſtood that I kept them back from the public view at that moment, when their appearance might have been perſonally detrimental to him, and injurious to the Public Cauſe; but that I did not engage that they ſhould be abſolutely and entirely ſuppreſſed. With my having kept them back at that time, his Lordſhip has frequently expreſſed his ſatisfaction; at my not engaging to ſuppreſs them, I have never heard that he, or any friend of his, has expreſſed any diſpleaſure or diſapprobation. In the caſe of Lord Lanſdown, I did not conſent that a wanton or malevolent uſe ſhould be made of his communications; in the caſe of Mr. Pitt,

* With reſpect to the publication of Lord Lanſdown's Letters to the Editor in 1782, he ſtates with pleaſure that his Lordſhip acknowledged the propriety of Mr. Wyvill's conduct; expreſſed his approbation of publicity in matters of national importance negotiated between a Miniſter of State and a Public Body of Men, or their confidential Agent; and conſidered ſuch Agent as reſponſible for his conduct to his Conſtituents and to the Public. This was the magnanimity of a frank and honourable mind, that ſcorned all unneceſſary concealment. Conſcious of having acted in a moſt important ſtation, with integrity to the Public, and fidelity to a reſpectable Body of Men, with whom he had entered into engagements, Lord Lanſdown was too candid and equitable to withhold his approbation, or withdraw his eſteem from others, who, in a humble ſtation, and with ſcanty means, have acted on the ſame general views; dealing with equal impartiality the ſame meaſure to Miniſters dead or living, to Stateſmen *in* or *out* of power, and in dangerous times endeavouring, like him, with honeſt zeal to ſupport the principles of our ſinking Conſtitution.

which

which is nearly ſimilar, I ſhall act by ſimilar rules; I ſhall lay myſelf under the ſame reſtriction, not wantonly or malevolently to publiſh "*the Heads of his Bill*," or any of *his Letters*; ſtill, however, reſerving to myſelf the right which I think I have to retain them in behalf of the public, and in certain caſes to publiſh them; particularly in the caſe alluded to in my Letter to Mr. Pitt, and more diſtinctly ſtated in my laſt Letter to yourſelf, viz. on the event of Mr. Pitt's death, without having effected a Reform in the Repreſentation, and without having publiſhed the ſame, or a better Plan of Reformation. By acting in this manner, I conceive I ſhall do my duty to the public, and yet nothing injurious or juſtly diſpleaſing to Mr. Pitt. If he wiſhes the papers in queſtion to be ſuppreſſed or returned to him, I wiſh to gratify him, provided it can be made ſufficiently evident that his claim to the diſpoſal of theſe papers is a juſt claim. I profeſs, however, that it ſeems to me highly improbable, or rather impoſſible, that he can ſhow any juſt claim to the diſpoſal of *the Letters*; it appears upon the face of them that they are public Letters, and they contain nothing, as I think, which upon examination will be found to alter their quality. But the paper intitled "*Heads of a Bill, &c.*" is ſomewhat differently circumſtanced; and though I do at preſent conceive it to be properly a communication of a public nature, like *the Letters*, yet if there is any circumſtance relating to this paper which ſhows that

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it ought not to be ſo conſidered, I ſhall not heſitate to return it to Mr. Pitt, when convinced of my miſtake; and I will publicly acknowledge my error, if into an error I have fallen from inadvertence or forgetfulneſs of any material circumſtance reſpecting this paper, and ſtate the reaſons alſo which may have produced that conviction; and that conviction will be produced, if Mr. Pitt will aſſert to me, that, when the paper intitled "*Heads of a Bill, &c.*" was communicated to me, he diſtinctly recollects, either that he laid me under an injunction of perpetual ſecrecy reſpecting it, or expreſſed to me that it was a paper which he reſerved the power to recall when he ſaw fit, or ſomewhat equivalent, clearly explained at the time. Under theſe circumſtances, I ſhall think myſelf authoriſed to deliver the paper in queſtion back to Mr. Pitt, though I do not myſelf recollect them. But if nothing of this import can be alledged by Mr. Pitt, I ſhall continue to think that I cannot ſurrender that paper without ſubjecting myſelf to the imputation of treachery to the public, or, at leaſt, of groſs neglect to promote its true intereſt. I beg leave to trouble you again to ſhow this Letter to Mr. Pitt.

I am ever, my dear Sir,
With great regard,
Moſt faithfully your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper XX.

Paper XX.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan. 27th*, 1796.

Sir,

I Do not trouble you with this Letter from any doubt reſpecting the nature of the correſpondence which paſſed between us in the earlier part of our intercourſe. I am fully ſatisfied that the papers alluded to are to be conſidered, like my correſpondence with Lord Lanſdown, as papers of a public nature; they were communications on a ſubject of great importance to the community; they paſſed between you in your official capacity as a Miniſter, or as a Member of Parliament, and the Agent of the Committee of Aſſociation of the County of York; who deems himſelf reſponſible for his conduct in thoſe political negociations to the Public, and in a more eſpecial manner to that Body of Men who were his Conſtituents, and whoſe confidence in him was the principal, if not the only, motive for thoſe communications. This was my opinion before I addreſſed my Letter to you, dated February 9th, 1793; and it was formed on an anxious recollection of the circumſtances relative to the papers in queſtion, and an attentive examination of their contents: and in that opinion I have been much confirmed, ſince the propoſal which I made to you in a Letter to

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our common Friend, Mr. Wilberforce, dated March 7th, 1793. This propoſal was relative to the publication or conditional ſuppreſſion of one of the papers alluded to, intitled, "Heads of a Bill, or Bills, for amending the Repreſentation;" and the Letter containing this propoſal, ſoon after its date, was put into your hand by him, and returned to him by you, without an anſwer. The propoſal was in effect an offer to return or ſuppreſs this paper, if you would declare that you underſtood it to have been a communication not of a public, but of a private nature; provided I might be at liberty to ſtate this declaration to the public, as my juſtification for the ſurrender of the paper. And I conſider your ſilence upon the occaſion of this offer, as a proof that, although you was unwilling to own, you found yourſelf unable to deny, that the paper in queſtion is a paper of a public nature, and had been communicated to me under no condition of ſecrecy, under no reſtriction or reſerve whatever, expreſſed or underſtood, at the time of its communication; and that no promiſe or engagement had been ſubſequently made on my part, which could juſtly be conſtrued to have taken away my right to hold this paper as a truſtee for the public, and eventually to publiſh it in the caſe of your death, or in the caſe of your hoſtility to the cauſe of Reform, and your ultimate refuſal to produce it.

But from this clear eſtabliſhment of my right to publiſh the paper in queſtion in each

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of theſe caſes, the duty to publiſh it immediately is not inferred. In this reſpect, I think myſelf warranted to aſſume a certain latitude, or diſcretionary power of delay; and you, Sir, on this occaſion, may with reaſon expect from me every mark of attention which is reconcilable with my duty to the public. I ſhould be extremely ſorry to produce this paper to general inſpection, if you really mean to publiſh it in its preſent form, or improved with ſuch corrections, as the experience of more than ten years in the higheſt official ſituation may have ſuggeſted to you. And yet it is poſſible that you meditate no corrections, that you intend to publiſh the Heads of your Bill neither in their preſent ſtate, nor in any improved ſtate; it is poſſible that you may have changed your political opinions, that you may wiſh to conſign the paper in queſtion to oblivion, with every other memorial of thoſe tranſactions for effecting a Reform of Parliament, in which you bore the principal part. But I ſtill continue to think, as I thought in the earlier period of our connection, that a ſubſtantial, moderate, and timely Reformation of Parliament, is neceſſary for the preſervation of our National Liberty. For this purpoſe, I conſider the Heads of your Bill of Reform as an important paper, which I hold in truſt for the public; and therefore I could not innocently concur with you to conceal it, if ſuch ſhould be your deſign; it even ſeems incumbent upon me to take effectual meaſures to ſecure the publication of it, by you or by myſelf.

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I do not aſſert that you wiſh to withhold the paper in queſtion from the public eye; but I think that, under the various circumſtances of the caſe, recent and remote, it would be ſimplicity, it would be folly and credulity in any man to believe that your political ſyſtem remains as favourable to popular rights as it was in the year 1785. In me it would be the weakneſs of idiocy, after having witneſſed the four laſt years of your adminiſtration, and waited ten years for the production of this paper by yourſelf, ſtill to confide, ſtill to acquieſce, ſtill to wait on, in ſilent expectation of its appearance; forgetting the uncertainty of life, the approaching infirmities of age, and fooliſhly declining to interpoſe in behalf of the public, till any interpoſition on my part might be no longer in my power. From theſe conſiderations, I am convinced that I ought not to delay explicitly to open my mind to you, and endeavour to obtain a diſtinct declaration of your intentions.

I do therefore avow my ſuſpicion of your hoſtility to the cauſe of Political Reformation, and of your purpoſe never to publiſh the paper in queſtion.

The taſk which this avowal of my diſtruſt compels me to undertake, I feel is a painful one. But it would be falſehood and baſe flattery to diſclaim my ſuſpicion; it would be deſpicable diſſimulation to act as if confidence were entire, and precaution unneceſſary; and it would be treachery to the public, to neglect the employment of thoſe obvious means which

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are within my reach, and by which the production of the document in queſtion by yourſelf may be ſecured, or its publication by me may be proved to have been a neceſſary act of juſtice to the country.

Feeling theſe impreſſions on my mind, I am not deterred by the unfavourable circumſtance of your having returned no anſwer to the former propoſal, from offering to you one propoſition more; and I now offer it with the ſincerity of a heart which is unconſcious of any inducement but the anxious wiſh to aſcertain and perform my duty to the public, and, as far as may be conſiſtent with that duty, to avoid doing what may be unacceptable to you.—My offer is briefly this, that if you will have the goodneſs to declare that you intend to publiſh the Heads of your Bill for reforming the Repreſentation in their preſent ſtate, or improved by ſuch corrections as your experience may have ſuggeſted, I ſhall moſt willingly acquieſce, and lay aſide my deſign to publiſh that paper. But I muſt be underſtood to be at liberty to repreſent this circumſtance as my reaſon for omitting that piece in the 4th volume of Political Papers which I am now preparing for the preſs; and I muſt alſo be conſidered as ſtill holding that paper in truſt for the public.

It is the verſatility of the Stateſman which I diſtruſt, and appearances may probably be thought to juſtify the ſuſpicion; yet I ſtill reſpect, and would rely on, the perſonal honour and integrity of the Man. And as I will not deny that appearances, however ſtrong they

may have been, poſſibly may have deceived and alarmed me too much; ſo you, I think, cannot juſtly alledge that my ſuſpicion has been formed on ſlight and frivolous grounds, or avowed with unfriendly haſte, and in an indecorous tone. If then you really mean to publiſh your Plan, and in truth you ſtill continue a friend to moderate Reformation, can there be any good reaſon why ſo natural a miſconception ſhould not be rectified? In ſuch a caſe, ſurely, condeſcenſion on your part, to remove miſtaken fears, and to ſatisfy honeſt ſcruples, could be no diſhonour; as on mine, I truſt, acquieſcence on the conditions propoſed could be no breach of duty to the Public.

But if you ſhould deem it expedient to return no anſwer to this offer, or ſhould anſwer it in a manner that comes not up to the terms propoſed, I ſhall not heſitate to draw the obvious concluſion. In that caſe, I ſhall proceed, as it may ſuit my convenience, to publiſh the paper in queſtion, with the other papers not included in this offer, which paſſed between us in the courſe of our correſpondence.* I am, Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XXI.

* This Letter was ſent to Mr. Pitt, by the poſt, on the day of its date; and in a ſhort time after that, a Duplicate, in which two or three verbal corrections were made, was ſent to James Martin, Eſq; the worthy Member for Tewkſbury; by whom it was delivered into Mr. Pitt's hands, in the Houſe of Commons, on the 17th of February, 1796. For this kind aſſiſtance, Mr. Wyvill returns Mr. Martin his moſt ſincere and grateful acknowledgments;

Paper XXI.

The Caſe *of the* Rev. C. Wyvill, *reſpecting the* Right Honourable William Pitt, *and his* Paper, *intitled*, "Heads of a Bill, or Bills, for amending the Repreſentation."

Burton-Hall, *April 6th*, 1796.

IT has always been the writer's wiſh to paſs his life in the peace and privacy of a country retirement. It has been his good fortune, and he is thankful for it, to have ſpent the largeſt and beſt portion of his days, ſince he attained to manhood, in this moſt pleaſant retreat. For the laſt twenty-two years, he has been an inhabitant of Yorkſhire; and during the far greateſt part of this period, he has enjoyed domeſtic peace and happineſs in retirement and wedded ſociety, with this added ſatisfaction during the latter part of this period, that much of his attention, and many of his hours, have been employed in the pleaſing cares of educating his numerous family of children, and providing for their intereſt and future welfare.

During this conſiderable ſpace of time, amuſement has ſeldom induced him to reſort

ledgments; happy to owe ſo important a ſervice to a friend equally diſtinguiſhed for his candour, benevolence, and all the milder virtues of private life; and for his firmneſs and intrepidity in the Senate, as a defender of the rights of his fellow-citizens, and a friend to the true intereſt of his country.

Of the Duplicate alluded to, the Letter printed here is a copy. At the time of its publication, *no anſwer* had been received from Mr. Pitt.

to the crowded haunts of men. Privacy he has preferred, becauſe privacy was more agreeable to his taſte. He was pleaſed with the blameleſs occupations, the innocent amuſements, of a country life; he loved the contemplation of nature, and viewed with delight the beauties of the changeful ſeaſons, and the leſs varying, yet not wholly fixed and ſtationary, beauties of the ſcenes around him. But retirement was his choice for reaſons of greater weight and gravity. He valued his independence; he felt the honeſt pride of a freeman; and independence and freedom he knew were beſt preſerved at a diſtance from the prodigality and enſnaring allurements of the capital. He is far, very far, from being as virtuous as he ought, and as he ſincerely wiſhes to be; yet, though not extremely virtuous, he is a lover of virtue, and though not profoundly learned, he is a friend to learning; and, in his opinion, the cultivation of virtue, and the purſuits of literature, are uſually moſt ſucceſsful in retirement. There might be in his temper ſome alloy of indolence and diffidence, which inclined him to a ſequeſtered life: But even his adverſaries are abundantly ready to teſtify, that, on various public occaſions, he has not been ſlow to ſtand forth, nor afraid to act his part in the buſy ſcene of politics. He adds, what they will be leſs willing to acknowledge, that he has never engaged in political buſineſs, but from a ſenſe of duty to his country; from a deteſtation of corruption, that execrable principle of Government;

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from indignation at direct and open invaſions of our rights; and from an honeſt zeal to defend public liberty, oppreſſed and endangered by an Adminiſtration once friendly to popular rights—after that, ſternly ſevere and reſolute to deſtroy them.—The ends he aimed at, were the reſtoration of national morals, then ſinking under the debaſing influence of our Government; and the preſervation of our Conſtitution on its genuine principles, then nearly defaced by the wear of paſſing ages, and almoſt loſt under the immenſe accumulation of abuſes. The ends were good and laudable; the means were unexceptionable, and becoming the ends: Argumentation at legal aſſemblies of the people, petitions, remonſtrances, aſſociations, engagements to vote againſt corruption and corrupt men,—theſe were the means to attain his objects; theſe were the weapons of his political warfare; the only weapons he will ever employ; convinced that virtuous men, united for the defence of liberty, by reaſon alone, muſt ultimately ſucceed againſt all oppoſition: And hence, in any event, they will be ſure to derive the beſt reward of their labours, that perfect ſatisfaction of mind, that conſciouſneſs of unimpeachable virtue, which no raſh appeal to force can ever beſtow.

But though it has been his happy lot to lead a great part of his life in privacy and in the country, yet, on the occaſions alluded to, he has ſeen enough of the world of politics to be fully convinced, that neither probity,

nor any prudential caution, can ſecure the opponent of national abuſes againſt the rancorous tooth of calumny. He has ſeen this in the caſe of men much better than himſelf; he has felt it in his own. He knows there are bigots in politics, as in religion; in both he is aware that the rage of paſſionate men, and the malice of cooler men, intereſted in the preſervation of abuſes, ever will purſue the beſt-intentioned promoters of Reformation. He, therefore, expects no exemption from their injurious attacks; but, truſting in the ſhield of integrity, he is prepared to meet his adverſaries with fortitude, and to bear their ſlanders with patience. Though he reverence the judgment of the public, he has ſeldom troubled it with the refutation of calumnies. To any vague imputations of ſedition or treaſon; to any anonymous falſehood, charging him with the guilt of a regicide and a traitor to his country, no reply in future, he truſts, will be neceſſary: He will leave accuſations ſo wholly deſtitute of foundation to fall of themſelves, as they ſoon muſt, down to the ground. Indeed, by ſome attacks, it would be folly to be provoked or diſcouraged. The inſects which have long been endeavouring to annoy him, bear the hornet's ſpite in their hearts, and an acrid venom in their tails; but their ſting is too feeble to inject it. He would not cruſh the tireſome creatures, he would only ſhun them. Does this language ſound too contemptuous? He ſincerely pities the perſons alluded to; but he

cannot think of their conduct to him, without ſome mixture of contempt.

Widely different are the ſenſations which have been produced in his mind by the cenſure of men, for whom he has been long accuſtomed to feel the warmeſt affection, and the ſincerity of whoſe friendſhip to him he cannot queſtion. He willingly admits their general candour; he highly eſteems their various talents; but he denies the juſtice of their reprehenſion reſpecting his behaviour to Mr. Pitt. In this reſpect, they have condemned *his paſt* and *his intended* conduct; his alluſion to the "Heads" of Mr. Pitt's Bill, in the printed Letter to him of February 1793, and his declared intention to publiſh that paper in the event of Mr. Pitt's death, or in the contingency of his hoſtility to the cauſe of Reformation, and his ultimate refuſal to publiſh it himſelf.

He truſts, however, he ſhall be able to impreſs on an impartial public the ſame conviction which he feels himſelf, viz. that, in the caſes alluded to, his conduct has been, and will be, perfectly conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt and moſt correct morality. But if his plea ſhould fail to produce the ſame conviction on the minds of thoſe friends whoſe haſty diſapprobation he wiſhes to remove, he will lament his misfortune, and impute it to no perſonal unkindneſs, to no deficiency in general candour and equity, but to the warmth of an early friendſhip for the Miniſter, or the ſtill more faſcinating effect of an enthuſiaſtic admiration

of his genius and character. The bias thus hung upon the mind may be unperceived, but its power to miſlead the judgment may be ſtrong and nearly irreſiſtible.

The juſtification of Mr. Wyvill's paſt conduct, in alluding to the "Heads," will be found to reſt on the following facts and obſervations: The force of the obſervations may be variouſly felt; the facts, he truſts, will be undiſputed by Mr. Pitt, or his moſt partial friends.

1. Mr. Wyvill aſſerts, that the intercourſe between Mr. Pitt and him was an intercourſe not of private friendſhip and perſonal attachment, but of political connection on public grounds. His acquaintance with Mr. Pitt, as he recollects, commenced in the ſpring of the year 1780. Mr. Pitt was, at that time, a very young man, and had not made his appearance in Parliament. Mr. Wyvill was then attending a Meeting of Deputies, appointed to prepare a plan of National Aſſociation, for effecting a Reformation of Parliament. He was one of the three Gentlemen delegated by the County of York for that purpoſe. Viſcount Mahon was deputed by the County of Kent to attend the ſame Meeting. The tranſaction of the buſineſs for which they had been deputed, neceſſarily required frequent communications between the Deputies: Lord Mahon and Mr. Wyvill ſoon found that they were agreed in their hatred to a corrupt ſyſtem of Adminiſtration; in their zealous attachment to Liberty, on the genuine principles of the Conſtitution;

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and in their firm conviction, that, without a radical reform of abuſes in the frame of Parliament itſelf, the official regulations propoſed by Burke, as the grand panacea for all our national complaints, would be found no better than trifling alteratives, or tranſient anodynes, whoſe ſlight and inſignificant effect would ſoon be overpowered by the deeply-vitiated habit of our Repreſentative Body. They feared that by a falſe complaiſance in the Meeting of Deputies to the Agent of the old Ariſtocracy, the opportunity to effect a moderate Reform in the Houſe of Commons might be unwiſely loſt, and thus the nation would be left expoſed to the danger, either of an aſſumption of Deſpotic Power on the one hand, or the calamities of a violent Revolution on the other hand; and they were perfectly agreed in their wiſhes and endeavours to prevent this fatal overſight in the popular counſels at that time.—This general ſimilarity in their principles and views, produced an intimacy between the noble Viſcount and the writer, which gradually became confidential, and which the eventful ſeries of ſixteen years has not diminiſhed, he truſts, on either ſide. To his truly noble Friend, Mr. Wyvill owed his introduction to Mr. Pitt's acquaintance: It was at Lord Mahon's houſe that he was firſt made known to Mr. Pitt; but whether the introduction was propoſed by Lord Mahon, or deſired by Mr. Pitt, he does not diſtinctly recollect.—At this interview, the ſentiments of Mr. Pitt, on the dangerous ſituation of the country at that time,

time, on the corrupt ſtate of Parliament, and the neceſſity for its Reformation at the requeſt and interpoſition of the People, were ſimilar to thoſe of Lord Mahon and the other Member of the General Deputation. This, at leaſt, was then, and ever ſince has been, the opinion of Mr. Wyvill. To ſuſpect the ſincerity of Mr. Pitt at that time, muſt be groundleſs and injurious jealouſy. He had been bred at the feet of Gamaliel in the ſtricteſt principles of the Conſtitution; he had been imbued by his Father with his own ardent love of liberty, his own ſcorn of corruption, and his ſtrong deſire for a purer ſtrain of Government under the controuling influence of a Reformed Repreſentation. It ſeems impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that doctrines ſo congenial to the purity and generous zeal of a youthful mind, recommended by ſuch a Preceptor, and that Preceptor his Father, were not embraced by Mr. Pitt with ſincerity and ardour. When he heard corruption avowed without ſhame, and ſaw it practiſed with impunity; when the corrupt prodigality of Miniſters increaſed with the public diſapprobation of their meaſures, and their miſconduct had driven the country to the brink of ruin, it was natural, and nearly unavoidable, that the Son of Chatham ſhould be indignant at the ſight, and ſhould devote his utmoſt efforts to extirpate this deep-rooted evil, this baneful corruption, from our Parliamentary Syſtem.

But for ſome years after this introduction, their general concurrence in theſe political ſentiments

timents produced little intercourſe between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wyvill, chiefly for want of opportunity on the part of Mr. Wyvill to cultivate an acquaintance he ſo highly valued. On Mr. Pitt's firſt motion in Parliament on the ſubject of Reformation *, Mr. Wyvill had not the honour of any communication with Mr. Pitt. After the rejection of that motion, they both attended a public Meeting at the Thatched Houſe †, when the reſolution propoſed by Mr. Wyvill, with a view to animate the nation to ſupport the intended exertions of Mr. Pitt in the ſucceeding Seſſion, appeared to meet his entire approbation. Before that Seſſion commenced, Mr. Pitt had entered the Cabinet. His introduction there, added new weight to his recommendation: the declaration of intended ſupport by Lord Shelburne, then principal Miniſter, was ſtill more encouraging; Yorkſhire and many other Diſtricts petitioned for Reform; and on the 7th of May, 1783, Mr. Pitt propoſed to Parliament reſolutions nearly coincident with thoſe propoſitions which had been adopted by the Aſſociation of Yorkſhire. On this occaſion, Mr. Wyvill had the honour of a conference with Mr. Pitt; and this interview gradually produced more and more intimate communications. After the defeat of the India Bill in the next Seſſion, Mr. Pitt ſucceeded the Duke of Portland in the ſtation of principal Miniſter: His efforts for Reform, though unſucceſsful,

* On the 7th of May, 1782.

† On the 18th of May, 1782.

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had won him much and deſerved popularity; and to that popularity he owed his elevation. In the recent ſtruggle on the India Bill, his friends in Yorkſhire had applauded his conduct; and when the Houſe of Commons endeavoured to embarraſs the meaſures of the new Miniſter, they ſupported him with vigour at a County Meeting. This was an eſſential ſervice, which contributed in a conſiderable degree to fix in his favour the then fluctuating opinion of the public. As ſoon, therefore, as he found himſelf a little better ſecured in the poſſeſſion of his power, he reſolved to gratify his northern friends, and to make another effort, with all his might, to accompliſh their favourite meaſure. On this occaſion he changed his ground, and his mode of procedure; and inſtead of moving for a Committee of Inquiry, as in 1782, or offering ſome ſpecific Reſolutions, as in 1783, he propoſed his new and more extended meaſure in the ſhape of a Bill. The County of York, at a Meeting held ſome time before, had adopted certain propoſitions as an amendment to their Aſſociation. The principles laid down by Mr. Pitt in his ſpeech to Parliament on the 18th of April, 1785, were correſpondent with thoſe propoſitions; but his judgment had ſuggeſted various improvements, which his ſuperior ſkill worked up, and formed a plan of Reformation the moſt extenſive and effectual, and at the ſame time the moſt mild and practicable, which had been deviſed.

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Soon after this generous reſolution had been fixed by Mr. Pitt, he communicated his intention to Mr. Wyvill; the intercourſe between them became more frequent and intimate; and Mr. Wyvill had the honour to be conſulted in the progreſs of the buſineſs, with reſpect to the mode of obtaining moſt effectually the popular ſupport to the intended motion, and alſo with reſpect to various modifications and corrections of the Plan. After the rejection of the motion by Parliament in 1785, the ſame perſonal intercourſe continued for ſome time; till at laſt, in 1787, the nation had become indifferent to all queſtions of Reform, and the hope of ſucceſs, in that temper of the public, was quite extinguiſhed. After this period, Mr. Wyvill ceaſed to hold any perſonal intercourſe with Mr. Pitt; but their political connection remained unbroken till the beginning of 1793. It had been commenced in 1780, from a ſimilarity of political opinion; it became intimate and unreſerved during Mr. Pitt's ſtruggle to effect a Reformation of Parliament; and it ceaſed when his hoſtility to his own former meaſures appeared to Mr. Wyvill, in 1793, to be no longer queſtionable. It is true, that during this connection, much perſonal eſteem and attachment to Mr. Pitt were mixed with the political confidence which Mr. Wyvill felt and profeſſed: But in 1783, and the three ſubſequent years, the intercourſe between them was not that of private friends, but that of a great Statesman treating with a very humble individual,

individual, the confidential Agent of a body of men, whoſe propoſitions of Reform he had reſolved to adopt, and whoſe political ſupport he wiſhed to obtain: And therefore, in Mr. Wyvill's conception, communications on the public buſineſs of his conſtituents are not to be conſidered by ſuch Agent as truſts of a private and confidential nature, but are properly to be underſtood as public communications, unleſs it were otherwiſe expreſſed at the time when ſuch communications were made.

2. Mr. Wyvill aſſerts, that the Letters and other Papers of Mr. Pitt, particularly the *Heads of a Bill, or Bills, for amending the Repreſentation*, were imparted by him to Mr. Wyvill, under no ſeal of ſecrecy, under no particular reſtriction or limitation expreſſed or underſtood at the time, and that no ſubſequent promiſe or engagement was entered into by Mr. Wyvill, which in any juſt or rational conſtruction can be conſidered as binding him to ſurrender the Paper in queſtion to Mr. Pitt, or to ſuppreſs it, or during his life not to publiſh it. It is far from his intention to conceal that, reſpecting the Heads of Mr. Pitt's Bill, a certain promiſe was made by Mr. Wyvill, which he conſiders himſelf to have fulfilled literally, and alſo in its ſpirit and moſt extenſive meaning. This ſhall be explained with fidelity, and with all the brevity which may be conſiſtent with clearneſs and preciſion.—Immediately, or very ſoon after the rejection of Mr. Pitt's motion on the 18th of April, for

for amending the Repreſentation, Mr. Wyvill waited upon him, and propoſed that this Bill might be drawn and publiſhed without delay. Among other reaſons for the meaſure, which are alluded to in the Letter of the 29th of July, 1787, this alſo, as Mr. Wyvill believes, was ſuggeſted to Mr. Pitt, viz. that when the alterations propoſed had been diſtinctly ſtated and laid before the public in the uſual form of a Bill, publiſhed by himſelf, Meetings of the Friends of Political Reformation might be held, by whom the Plan thus authenticated might be conſidered and approved; and thus the hitherto diſjointed Party of Reformers might be united in one firm and compact Body, by whoſe unanimous efforts the ſucceſs of Mr. Pitt's exertions, in the next Seſſion, or at leaſt in the courſe of the exiſting Parliament, might moſt probably be ſecured. To this ſuggeſtion, Mr. Pitt objected the impoſſibility of complying with it during this Seſſion, on account of the preſſure of public buſineſs, and the formidable oppoſition in Parliament. He wiſhed to reſerve the Bill till the favourable moment for carrying it was arrived, and in the mean time to avail himſelf of all the light which could be thrown upon the ſubject, in order that every objection might be more maturely conſidered, every difficulty might be more effectually obviated, and every correction and improvement might be introduced, which would meliorate his Plan, and render it at once acceptable to Parliament and the Public.

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Soon after this interview with Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wyvill was honoured with another, which he requeſted at the deſire of a previous Meeting of Gentlemen, friendly to his moderate propoſal of Reformation, and anxious to unite the various bands of Reformers on this ground. Their reſolution requeſting an authentic copy of his Plan was communicated to Mr. Pitt: It was ſuggeſted to him, that although, for the reaſons lately ſtated, it might be expedient to poſtpone the publication of his Bill for ſome time; yet another method might be taken, if it ſhould meet his approbation, which would anſwer the purpoſe for which the Gentlemen had ſolicited a copy of his Plan: That method was, to ſubſtitute a Summary Explanation of the Principles of his Bill, inſtead of the Bill itſelf, to be drawn by Mr. Wyvill, but authenticated to the intended Meeting by Mr. Pitt. This would afford the proper ground for paſſing reſolutions of thanks and approbation; and thus the various ſects and ſubdiviſions of the Reformers might be induced to coaleſce and ſupport his plan with their united ſtrength. Of this idea Mr. Pitt expreſſed his approbation, provided care were taken in drawing the Summary Explanation, abſolutely to avoid every alluſion to the *Heads of his Bill for amending the Repreſentation*. The reaſon for this reſtriction, as Mr. Wyvill recollects, was this: that any ſuch alluſion would afford an opportunity to ſome of his acute and vigilant opponents in the Houſe of Commons to call upon him for the publication of

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the Bill itſelf; a call with which, for the reaſons he had given, it would at that time be extremely inconvenient to comply, and yet with which compliance could not be refuſed, without hurting his character in the opinion of his reforming friends. With this reſtriction Mr. Wyvill promiſed that his Explanation ſhould be exactly conformable: It was drawn accordingly, with no reference to the "*Heads*;" it was ſeen and approved by Mr. Pitt, and laid before the Meeting at the Thatched-Houſe on the 24th of May, 1785, with authority from Mr. Pitt to declare to the Meeting, that he acknowledged the Explanation to contain an exact and accurate account of the Principles of his intended Bill for amending the Repreſentation. This was the literal performance of the only promiſe or engagement made by Mr. Wyvill reſpecting the Paper in queſtion; and his ſilence upon this ſubject till the year 1793, amounts, in his conception, to the fulleſt performance of it in ſpirit and in meaning. A promiſe not to allude to a certain Paper, upon a particular occaſion, and for particular reaſons mentioned at the time when the promiſe is required, is not equivalent to a promiſe of perpetual ſecrecy; nor can it be conſidered as binding on a change of circumſtances, under which thoſe reaſons have plainly ceaſed to exiſt. In the year 1785, the Miniſter's power reſted on no ſtable or ſecure foundation; the Ariſtocracy, reinforced by the perſonal friends, and led by the ſuper-eminent genius, of Mr. Fox, preſented to

Mr. Pitt a formidable phalanx of opponents, and the Crown viewed him with fear and jealouſy, which nothing could have overcome but the ſuperior dread of his Great Rival. In this arduous and critical ſituation, Mr. Pitt feared to call forth the animadverſions of his adverſaries on the ſubject of Reform, for they might prove extremely embarraſſing; and he wiſhed not to excite the ſuſpicions of his earlieſt and moſt ſincere friends, for their ſupport could not then be ſpared. But in 1793, the circumſtances of his political ſituation were advantageouſly changed; the confidence of the Crown was won; the ſtrength of his Rival was weakened by deſertions; the great Body of the Ariſtocracy was united with him, and his exorbitant power ſeemed fixed on a ſolid and permanent foundation: From the oppoſition of his Antagoniſt, he had nothing to fear; from the aſſiſtance of his Reforming Friends, he had nothing to hope. Thus circumſtanced, he did not ſcruple to give his negative, in a leſs peremptory tone at firſt, to Mr. Flood's propoſition of Reform in the year 1790; and in 1792, he oppoſed, with an appearance of more confirmed hoſtility, an intimation of a ſimilar motion by Mr. Grey, and the motion itſelf in 1793. From this conduct it ſeems rightly to be collected, that the reaſons no longer exiſted for which ſilence had been required and promiſed; and therefore, that Mr. Wyvill's engagement had been completely fulfilled in ſpirit, as well as in the letter of it, by his ſilence down to the year

1793.

1793. The juſtice of this concluſion will be farther confirmed by the conſideration, that ſilence was required by Mr. Pitt, not merely to prevent embarraſſment to himſelf, but alſo for other more important reaſons. In 1785 he was undoubtedly a zealous friend to the Reformation of Parliament; honour and intereſt concurred with his early prejudices, to inſpire that zeal; they pointed to that line of conduct as the road at once to power and true glory. When he delivered the Heads of his Bill to Mr. Wyvill, the Paper was unaccompanied with any condition or reſerve whatever. To determine with what intention it was thus delivered, it muſt be conſidered what were his principles, what were his views at that time: Theſe, it has been ſeen, were decidedly favourable to the cauſe of Reformation; and hence the concluſion follows undeniably, that the Paper in queſtion was put into Mr. Wyvill's hands with a view to promote the cauſe of Reformation. Within two months after this Paper had been thus committed to Mr Wyvill's cuſtody, in truſt for the public, Mr. Pitt required ſecrecy reſpecting it, on a particular occaſion, for public as well as private reaſons, which have been already ſtated, exactly conformable with that view which at firſt induced him to deliver it to Mr. Wyvill. The reſerve was neceſſary, to prevent inconvenience to himſelf; it was neceſſary alſo, to prevent injury to the common cauſe. The perſonal inconvenience was a circumſtance of tranſient duration; and reſpecting it, the wri-

ter's obligation to ſilence ſeems to have been fulfilled in 1793. He, therefore, conſidered himſelf as then free from that engagement, and under the ſole obligation, in conformity with the truſt originally repoſed in him, to conſult the intereſt of the cauſe of Reformation. The leaſt extended idea of that truſt bound him, he thought, to hold "*The Heads*" in behalf of the public, and in the contingent events of Mr. Pitt's death, or his abſolute hoſtility to Reform, to lay that Paper before the public.

In the event of Mr. Pitt's death, the obligation to publiſh the Heads ſeems inconteſtible; and by parity of reaſon, in the event of his manifeſt hoſtility to Reform, the ſame obligation ſeems equally well founded. For let it be ſuppoſed, that from a change of intereſt or opinion, the ardour of Mr. Pitt to defend the rights of the people is cooled, that his patriotic ſpirit is damped and extinguiſhed by the mephitic gas of the Houſe of Commons, that his feelings are dead to the cauſe of Reformation, and alive only to the ſupport of that ſyſtem which he had ſolemnly engaged to deſtroy: In theſe circumſtances, it is evident that the publication in queſtion would be more neceſſary than it would have been even in the contingency of the Miniſter's death. If that event had happened a few years ago, it would have deprived the cauſe of Reformation of its ableſt and moſt powerful advocate: By his hoſtility to that cauſe, the Reformers not only loſe their Leader, but they find his abilities

abilities turned againſt them; aided by the impoſing credit which his former zeal had procured him—reinforced by the formidable power of that ſtation to which their confidence had contributed to raiſe him. To aſcertain that hoſtility with preciſion, may be a taſk as difficult as it muſt be painful to the Truſtee; but from the fact once clearly eſtabliſhed, his obligation to publiſh reſults with equal certainty in this caſe as in the other, and the neceſſity for it is more indiſpenſible. Such in 1793 were his conceptions of the nature of the truſt repoſed in him, and ſuch his ideas of the duty which future circumſtances might call him to perform.

At that time the tenor of Mr. Pitt's conduct for ſome years had excited ſtrong ſuſpicions in his mind, that the public principles of the Miniſter were changed, that he was become hoſtile to Reformation, and never would publiſh his Bill. He felt it to be his duty, if time ſhould prove theſe ſuſpicions to be juſt, neither to concur with Mr. Pitt in his tergiverſation, nor in compliance with his new ſyſtem to ſuppreſs the Paper in queſtion; but in conformity with his intentions when that Paper was communicated, to execute his truſt with fidelity to the public. In purſuance of theſe ideas, the alluſion to the "Heads" was publiſhed in 1793; it was an intimation to Mr. Pitt, but leſs diſtinct and explicit than a ſubſequent intimation, that his ſincerity was ſuſpected; and it was a notification to him that, *in certain con-*

ceivable circumſtances, Mr. Wyvill held himſelf bound to publiſh this Paper.

From theſe plain facts and obſervations, he truſts, it will be the deciſion of his candid and impartial judges, that the alluſion in 1793 to the "Heads" of Mr. Pitt's Bill was an innocent and juſtifiable action. On the ſame grounds it may be admitted alſo, that he has a right to hold that Paper in truſt for the public, and to publiſh it in the event of Mr. Pitt's death; and even before that event, in the caſe of his manifeſt hoſtility to the cauſe of Reformation. That right he may be allowed to poſſeſs; but to exerciſe it upon ſlight preſumptions, conjectural ſurmiſes, or even plauſible probabilities of Mr. Pitt's tergiverſation, this, it may be ſaid, would be invidious and unbecoming; and if not a breach of truſt, would at leaſt be a very indiſcreet, or a very malevolent, abuſe of it. And here it is readily granted, that the publication of that Paper without the Donor's conſent, on a haſty and ſlightly-founded ſuppoſition of hoſtility, would be reprehenſible conduct in the Truſtee; but he contends, that, on a rapid review of the whole caſe, the proofs will be found completely ſatisfactory; ſuch as a man of candour will aſſent to—ſuch as a man of probity ought to act on; and to which no additional ſtrength of evidence could well be given, but by a direct avowal of hoſtility from the Miniſter himſelf; for which the Truſtee ſurely cannot be expected to wait.

1. From

1. From the rejection of Mr. Pitt's motion of Reform in 1785, to the preſent moment, is a period of nearly eleven years. During this long courſe of time, Mr. Pitt has not found a proper opportunity to publiſh his Bill, or to bring forward his motion of Reform afreſh; and to the propoſitions which other Reformers have advanced, at different times, he has given his uniform oppoſition. To juſtify his inactivity in the former part of this period, it may be truly alledged, that the public was become too languid in the purſuit of Reformation to afford a proſpect of ſucceſs; to excuſe it in the latter part, it may be pretended, that the great maſs of the people were become ſo zealous for Reform, and had adopted ſuch extenſive expectations of change, that any attempt to innovate would be dangerous. But the tranſitions of popular opinion are not like thoſe of the weather, ſudden and momentary; the paſſage of the nation from cold to hot, from too little zeal to too much, was undoubtedly gradual; and in this progreſs of opinion, there muſt have been a time when the nation had reached that happy temperature of zeal, without exceſs, when moderate Reform might have been propoſed with ſafety, and with a fair probability of ſucceſs. Why was not this attempted by the Miniſter in the year 1790, or in 1791? Surely not becauſe there was then too much zeal for change; for a contrary reaſon was oppoſed to Mr. Flood. And why did he diſcourage Reform in the two ſucceeding years? Surely not

becauſe there was too little zeal for Reformation; for a contrary reaſon was oppoſed to Mr. Grey. Mr. Pitt is too ſagacious to have overlooked the golden opportunity; the juſt concluſion is, his ſyſtem was changed.

2. With this concluſion his other meaſures about this time accord, and confirm the ſuppoſition. The Proclamations againſt Sedition were drawn in terms of ſuch extenſive import, as would have condemned himſelf and his own former meaſures, had a ſimilar edict been iſſued in the year 1782. The profeſſed object of theſe Proclamations was, to ſtigmatiſe and diſgrace the raſh Republican, who had then dared to libel the Conſtitution of England; and his deluded followers, who aimed with him not to repair, but to overthrow the fabric of our Government. But by the inſidious terms in which thoſe Proclamations were drawn, the former friends of the Miniſter were comprehended in the common maſs of ſeditious delinquents, and the peaceful adherents of his own moderate plan of Reformation were injuriouſly claſſed with men who ſought the eſtabliſhment of a democratic Government through all the calamities of a civil war and a forcible Revolution.

3. After having thus diſgraced the cauſe of moderate Reform in the eyes of the public, and expoſed his earlieſt friends to the malice of informers and the rage of political bigots, he has purſued the leſs cautious Reformers in every part of the kingdom with unrelenting ſeverity; the conviction of ſome of theſe unfortunate

fortunate perſons has been effected in a mode diſgraceful to the Judicature of our country, and the puniſhment inflicted upon others has been ſuch as humanity cannot but lament and diſapprove. Of ſome of theſe patriot criminals the only guilt has been, that they preſumed to expreſs, in language once the Miniſter's, their contempt and deteſtation of public abuſes: of others the crime proved has been, that, following his example, they have dared to animate and exhort the people in their ſeveral counties and diſtricts to meet, to aſſociate, and to exert every legal power then veſted in the collective body to deſtroy thoſe abuſes, and reſtore the Legiſlature to its ancient purity. For offences like theſe, they have been tried as incendiaries and felons; they have been doomed to long impriſonment, or a worſe tranſportation to a ſavage land. After that, the rancour of official proſecution charged ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of theſe Reformers with the guilt of Treaſon. A part of them were tried and abſolved by their country; but miniſterial petulance dared to condemn them. At laſt the Juries, by their unſhaken adherence to juſtice, diſcouraged the odious purſuit; and the reſt of theſe victims were diſmiſſed without a trial, to repair their health and fortunes, ſhattered and broken by the rigours of confinement, and to enjoy their innocence as well as they could in the boſom of their ruined families. Some of thoſe perſons might be raſh and miſguided zealots, who advanced inadmiſſible claims of Reform, and

promoted

promoted thoſe claims by means which no friend to peace and order will undertake to juſtify. Univerſal ſuffrage ſeems to be unadviſable in the preſent corrupt ſtate of ſociety; extremely numerous aſſemblies of the people always have ſome tendency to diſorder and tumult; and in any ſtate of ſociety, diſorder and tumult ought to be checked and repreſſed. But to a Government ſupported as our's is, by an immenſe revenue, and the greateſt military force ever maintained in Britain, a few raſh men could not be juſtly formidable. To the Miniſter of Reform they were fit objects not of his vindictive purſuit, but of his lenity and forbearance; for his example had miſled them. Inſtead, therefore, of exaggerating their indiſcretions into acts of Treaſon, it would have well become him to have pardoned them; mixing with his mercy due vigilance to prevent any dangerous exceſſes, and haſtening to cloſe the ſource of diſcontent and diſturbance, by granting a prudent redreſs of thoſe grievances, of which, he cannot deny, they juſtly complain.

4. But inſtead of redreſs, the Miniſter gave the people a war; furious, bloody, and portending incalculable evils to England. The origin of this great calamity may be traced with probability to a concurrence of circumſtances apparently fortuitous and inſignificant. It chanced, or, to ſpeak more properly, it was permitted by Providence, that, during the tempeſts of the French Revolution, two very extraordinary men, Thomas Paine and Edmund

mund Burke, ſhould appear in this country: Each of theſe perſonages is endowed with that fanatical zeal, and that heat and irritability of temper, by which the poſſeſſor is fitted in ſuitable conjunctures, and with adequate talents, to ſpread the flames of war, and to promote Revolutions in the world. Thomas Paine is unlearned; but nature has given him a ſtrong, though coarſe, underſtanding, with much originality of thought and energy of expreſſion. He is fitted by nature to be a democratic Leader; and early prejudice, habit, and a variety of accidental circumſtances, confirmed the original tendency of his mind. Edmund Burke has had the advantage of a learned education: His genius is ſhowy, but not ſolid; copious, but not correct. His judgment is inferior to that of many of his cotemporaries; but he unites induſtry with wit, humour, and a brilliant, though diſordered, imagination: His elocution is rapid, and well adapted to the ſportive or impetuous ſtyle of oratory in which he excels; but he is ſeldom argumentative, and more ſeldom convincing. Had literature been his profeſſional purſuit, he might have ſhone through many a volume a ſplendid, ſuperficial Rhetorician, decked in the ornaments of a glittering eloquence, and proud of his tinſel. For philoſophical reſearch, his faculties are leſs fit; and in the more abſtruſe ſciences he probably never could have diſcovered one important truth; but, like Fontenelle, he might have explained what others had invented, and might have embel-

liſhed

liſhed the ſyſtem of Newton with wit, pathos, and all the tinkling trappings of his metaphorical ſtyle. But he was doomed to be a politician; and the pride of genius and learning fitted him to be an ariſtocrat. Early connection with an honoured Nobleman confirmed this natural and acquired tendency; he was at firſt his dependent; then, freed from that ſervitude by his noble Patron's munificence at his death, he became the counſellor and confidential guide of an alarmed ariſtocracy. At the period alluded to, the popular ſocieties for Reform had received a rapid increaſe: The grateful zealot of ariſtocracy trembled with rage and fear at the approaching ruin of their uſurpations. But one great effort to ſave them muſt be made; and, fortunately for his purpoſe, the exceſſes of the French Revolution held out a conſoling hope that the ſyſtem of abuſes might be prolonged, perhaps perpetuated. He deſcribed thoſe exceſſes, and predicted more, in the tragic colours of an eloquence but too well ſuited to their enormity; and events ſtill gratified his humanity with the fulfilment of his predictions. On this occaſion, the raſh Republican who had before denied that we have a Conſtitution, ſtept forth a ſecond time into the field of combat, and, in his rage for confuſion, propoſed an Agrarian tax for England, holding forth to the poor the plunder of the rich. This was the very act of folly and temerity which his ariſtocratic antagoniſt probably wiſhed; and now Burke, with the united ariſtocracy at his back, called with impetuous

impetuous vociferation for a cruſade againſt France, and the dormancy of our Conſtitution. This was the critical period of Mr. Pitt's adminiſtration. If the Miniſter, at that time, had firmly oppoſed each of theſe combuſtible politicians; if he had ſecured the peace of the country againſt the wild projects of Paine, and reſiſted the counſels of Burke, as wild, and in the event far more pernicious, he would have been the greateſt benefactor to the country and to mankind. He might, indeed, have been turned out of his official ſituation; but the unanimous voice of a grateful public would ſoon have recalled him to it, with full power to carry into effect thoſe neceſſary plans of Reformation with which his political courſe had been begun. Inſtead of thus mounting to the ſummit of true glory, and there placing himſelf on a level with Waſhington, he was diſcouraged by the ſhort difficulties of the aſcent; he choſe to deſcend from the eminence he had attained, and to keep the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of the firſt ſeat at the Board of Treaſury. Sound policy required him to hold a middle courſe between the two dangerous extremes of Paine and Burke. But Burke's violence in the Senate for a war with France was not ill adapted to the new ſyſtem of the Miniſter, and it gradually appeaſed their long hoſtility. Inſtead of ſhunning each of theſe inflammatory men, he flew from the turbulent Republican to embrace the factious Enthuſiaſt of the Ariſtocracy. To the wildeſt flights of Burke's maddening

maddening imagination he nodded approbation; and Burke declared himself much dulcified to him. Soon after that, negociation, humbly and repeatedly fought by the Government of France, was proudly rejected by the Engliſh Miniſter; the military force by ſea and land was rapidly augmented, and nothing but a pretext ſeemed wanting for an immediate commencement of hoſtilities. But when war is reſolved on, a pretext can never be long wanted. The pretext found, was the death of Louis the Sixteenth, after a declaration in the Engliſh Parliament that peace or war ſhould be the conſequence of the pardon or execution of that Monarch. On this unjuſt interference depended a queſtion which involved the fate of a great part of mankind. The declaration haſtened the death of the unfortunate Monarch it was meant to ſave, and that event to the Engliſh Cabinet was deciſive for war; and yet high authority has not ſcrupled to call it a juſt and neceſſary war.

It is true that the determination for war was not without ſome pretence of provocation to this country; but it was ſuch provocation as our own conduct had excited, and ſuch as a Waſhington would have pardoned in a nation ſtruggling for liberty, inflamed and almoſt diſtracted in the paroxyſm of a revolutionary fever. His humane and prudent policy might have taught the Miniſter not to have ſought pretexts for war, but to have ſhunned them; to have been prepared for defence, but to have

have maintained neutrality; and to have tried every expedient of patience and temperate negociation to have preſerved the peace of his country. Such was the actual conduct of the wiſe Stateſman of America under ſimilar or greater provocations from France; and ſuch would have been the counſel of Burke, if he had been cool, diſintereſted, and wiſe like Waſhington. But the character of our penſioned Politician is the very reverſe; in his temper, paſſionate and fiery; in his purſuit of power and emolument, eager and indefatigable; in his public counſels, raſh and violent: his claims to the honours of a true Patriot or a wiſe Stateſman will be diſallowed by poſterity. In public life he has neither been independent nor diſintereſted. Before the French Revolution, the general tenor of his conduct was little uſeful to his country; after that event, it has been pernicious both to his country and to the general intereſts of humanity.

Unfortunately, the Miniſter preferred the furious ſuggeſtions of a paſſionate Declaimer to the example of Waſhington's juſt and humane policy; poſſibly, too, the unjuſt and deluſive hope to diſmember France and aggrandize Great-Britain might contribute to miſlead him. The avowed purpoſe of the war, at leaſt it was avowed by the Miniſter's new adviſer, was to perpetuate the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem of abuſes; to beat down and for ever ſuppreſs the *Jacobinical* principles of Locke and Sidney, of Savile and Chatham.—And what has been the reſult of this war, ſo eagerly commenced, on views ſo

juſt

juſt and reaſonable? An unprecedented expence of blood and treaſure; a long ſeries of diſaſters, intermixed with ſucceſſes few and inadequate; impending famine; approaching bankruptcy; and an aggravation of national diſcontent, accompanied with unequivocal proofs, perſonally applied to the Miniſter, of the anger and reſentment of the people. The ſyſtem of war and coercion, inſtead of appeaſing the popular diſcontents, has been found to inflame them; and the clamours of a ſtarving populace have daily reſounded louder and louder in the ears of Majeſty for Peace and a Reform of Parliament.

5. But hence have been furniſhed freſh pretexts to the Miniſter for his enterprizes againſt the rights and liberty of his country. To ſtifle theſe complaints, the galling cord of coercion has been ſtrained with augmented rigour, and ſuddenly the people have found themſelves expoſed, by a new and ſevere ſtatute, to *vague and conſtructive charges of Treaſon*; and by another act, more dangerous ſtill, deprived of their ancient and indubitable right to *Free Diſcuſſion* and *Free Petition*. In vain was it pleaded by the advocates of theſe rights, that, for the fault of a few deſperate individuals, innocent millions ought not, and juſtly could not, forfeit their undoubted rights; in vain was it pleaded, that, as far as human laws can protect them, the ancient law of the land was clearly ſufficient to protect his Majeſty's Perſon and Government; that to violate the privileges of the people, ſolemnly ſtipulated for them at the Revolution, and confirmed by the

Bill

Bill of Rights, was a procedure big with injuſtice and danger; that a precedent thus trenching on that fundamental law had a manifeſt tendency to unſettle the Government, and if not quickly reverſed by Parliament, on the remonſtrances of an injured and indignant people, would lead by certain conſequence either to confuſion, or the ſpeedy extirpation of our liberties. The influence of the Miniſter of Reform prevailed; the injurious Bills were paſſed; the people were reſtrained in the exerciſe of their right to petition, and by this privation the only rational ground of hope was loſt, that a peaceful interpoſition of the people might effect a Reformation of Parliament. By a vigorous exertion the nation may recover theſe loſt rights, and with them reſtore the proſpect of a future redreſs of their other grievances; but after this conduct of the Miniſter, no change of meaſures can reſtore to him the loſt eſteem and confidence of the public. Let Mr. Pitt's moſt partial friends now declare, whether his hoſtility to Reform be ſtill problematical; or, whether the tenor of his conduct has not clearly demonſtrated that he is become an enemy to that neceſſary meaſure.

This is the material point in the preſent caſe; it is the hinge on which the judgment of his judges will turn, either to approve or cenſure the conduct of the Truſtee. If this point be clearly eſtabliſhed, as he hopes it is, objections drawn from the temper of the times can have little weight to diſſuade the

publication. It is not his intention to aggravate faults, or to inflame diſcontent: the faults have been committed, and the diſcontent has been excited; and it is his purpoſe to demonſtrate thoſe faults, in order only that they may be corrected; to evince the juſtice of the popular complaint, only that it may be redreſſed; and to point out the approaching danger, only that it may be avoided. He wiſhes to impreſs on the perſons chiefly concerned, what he conceives to be inconteſtible truths; that it were better and wiſer to endeavour to conciliate than to cruſh the people; that it were more juſt, more humane, and ſafer too, to make ſeaſonable and prudent conceſſions, than to attempt to ſuppreſs the ſpirit of Reform by the ſtrong hand of military power. Conceſſion may ſecure the public tranquillity, and augment the public happineſs; the attempt to compel ſubmiſſion without redreſs would be equally ruinous whether, in the fatal conteſt that muſt enſue, the people were victors or overcome. Before the war with France took place, he foreſaw that the ſyſtem ſo vehemently preſſed by the zealot of ariſtocracy could tend to nothing but an aggravation of the then exiſting diſcontent, and finally to deſperation and national confuſion. In his Letter to Mr. Pitt, he ſtated theſe evils as the too probable conſequence of a great foreign war, and an internal ſyſtem adverſe to the rights of the people. In the progreſs of this unfortunate war, and in the evolution of this unpopular ſyſtem, their calamitous conſequences

quences have but too plainly and diſtinctly verified the former part of his prediction; and aggravated diſcontent now threatens that cataſtrophe which every good citizen muſt deprecate and wiſh to avert. In this perilous ſtate of the country, he wiſhes to aſk men in power, Shall we perſevere in the meaſures which have manifeſtly produced this alarming change in the temper of the people? Shall we perſevere in this fatal war, contending at every poſſible riſque for advantages; ſome of which are ideal, ſome may be more ſubſtantial, but are evidently unattainable? Shall we perſevere in the ſyſtem of internal coercion, protecting acknowledged abuſes, and advancing with haſty ſtrides, like raviſhers in open day, to invade the rights of the people, and violate the proſtrate Conſtitution? Is it thus we expect to ſecure the tranquillity of the country, by leaving the great maſs of the community no property to loſe, and no privilege which they can think ſecure? In this dangerous criſis, is it the part of a faithful ſubject and real well-wiſher to his country to diſſemble grievances; to acquieſce under the dangerous policy of the new ſyſtem, and ſuffer a daring Miniſter to go on, unwarned, heaping miſery upon miſery, till the veſſel of national patience be filled and run over? Or, is it not rather truly becoming that character, to raiſe his voice, however feeble it may be, and to beſeech and adjure the Repreſentatives of the nation to return to the ways of peace and ſafety; to exert their conſtitutional powers to cloſe the

unjuſt and fatal conteſt with France; and to redreſs with moderation and prudence, before it be too late, thoſe great and acknowledged grievances of which the public complain? There was in the year 1780 more violent fermentation in the minds of the lower claſſes of the people, and it burſt out in acts of more extenſive and dangerous outrage than thoſe which have been witneſſed at this time. Indolent, and perhaps timid, as Lord North was, he reſiſted the demands of an intolerant populace, and he did well. He was nobly ſupported in it by Sir G. Savile and other wiſe Patriots of that day: With all their regard for the ſenſe of the people, with all their condeſcenſion for their prejudices, they felt the diſgrace which muſt attend their yielding to the barbarous wiſh of intolerance; they felt they had acted aright in extending toleration, and they generouſly reſolved to brave the popular fury, and maintain the benevolent ſyſtem they had eſtabliſhed. The miſguided people were aſhamed of their unjuſt and intemperate conduct, and the juſt firmneſs of Parliament abaſhed intolerance for ever. But far different from the wiſdom of that perſeverance would be the reſolution of Parliament to perſiſt in ſupporting the new ſyſtem of the Miniſter. The lower claſſes of the people may now manifeſt ſymptoms of impatient diſcontent, againſt which the Executive Government ought to keep a vigilant guard; but the Legiſlature is bound to appeaſe that diſcontent, if poſſible, by lenient and conciliatory means.

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It is, perhaps, among things poſſible, that lenity and prudent conceſſion might fail to ſoothe and pacify the people, and reſtore perfect harmony and tranquillity to the country; but a bare poſſibility of a failure is no ſufficient reaſon why the humane experiment ſhould not firſt be tried. If it ſhould ſucceed, a world of miſery would be ſaved; but till the effect of lenient meaſures has been proved, a ſyſtem of coercion and reſtraint is neither juſt nor politic. It is unjuſt to cavil at the cries of the people, and to refuſe redreſs, becauſe it may be aſked with impatience, in too loud a tone; it is in theſe times doubly impolitic to alienate their affections, when juſtice is all they aſk. The abuſes which are complained of are real and moſt pernicious abuſes; the beſt and wiſeſt men in the kingdom, with the Miniſter himſelf at their head, have ſanctioned their complaints, and propoſed redreſs. The people are now contending againſt uſurpations and abuſes, the neceſſary conſequence of which, if uncorrected, muſt be the loſs of public liberty, the depravation of public morals, and a Government ſupported againſt the virtue and good ſenſe of the nation; firſt, by corruption; at laſt, by tyrannical force alone. Univerſal ſuffrage may be an inadmiſſible principle of Reform in the preſent ſtate of this country, and immenſely numerous aſſemblies of the people may well excite ſome apprehenſion of tumult; but to ſuppreſs theſe great aſſemblies by penal laws, and leave the diſcontents of the people unappeaſed by any redreſs, may pro-

duce a ſhort interval of calm, but it will ſoon be ſucceeded by greater ſtorms than ever. The means propoſed by the people for effecting their end may be improper, but the end itſelf is good and laudable. To cut off confeſſed abuſes, and to deſtroy corruption, they are ſure muſt be proper, and it is now their turn to feel they are right. The perſeverance of Parliament would not now abaſh them; it would but increaſe and exaſperate their diſcontent; and thus Parliament might too probably loſe their confidence for ever.

To prevent this fatal evil, and to ſecure the genuine principles of the Conſtitution, muſt be the wiſh of every good citizen. Except the few Patrons of Boroughs, Peers, and Commoners, who form an Ariſtocracy which is unknown and hoſtile to the Conſtitution, all are intereſted to promote a temperate Reform of thoſe abuſes which conſtitute the power of that Ariſtocracy. Some of theſe Peers and Commoners, on whom the chance of their birth has devolved a ſhare in the unconſtitutional powers alluded to, have nobly ſet the example of preferring the juſt ſecurity of the people's rights to the retention of an odious and unjuſt command. If aught of prudence or an honourable ſhame, or a ſtill more laudable feeling of benevolence, could induce a few of their brethren to renounce that iniquitous patronage, all might yet be well. Let the new ſyſtem of the Miniſter be abandoned; let peace be concluded with France on equitable terms; let a Reformation of Parliament,

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on Mr. Pitt's ſafe and moderate plan, be granted, with a reſtoration of our ancient and indubitable right to free diſcuſſion and free petition, and the quiet and happineſs of the country will be effectually ſecured. Theſe are the means, the only means, by which the nation may be reſtored to that good temper on which the preſervation of its internal peace depends, and to that cordial eſteem and veneration for its Government, in which, after the concluſion of a Peace with France, the only juſt and permanent ſecurity can be found againſt the increaſing power of the French Republic, and againſt the progreſs of their democratic principles.

The motives which have been aſſigned for the Truſtee's ſuſpicion, and conſequent breach with Mr. Pitt, he is confident will not be queſtioned by his honourable friends, on whoſe account he firſt thought of drawing this plea, in the anxious hope to obtain their acquittal and approbation: But, he doubts not, it will be ſaid by uncandid bigots, and mercenary adherents to the Miniſter, that the breach, and the ſubſequent publications, have been occaſioned by pique and reſentment. To this random objection it might be ſufficient to return an anſwer when any particular cauſe of offence were aſſigned, or any particular time were fixed when this pretended pique and reſentment took place: But Mr. Wyvill will not allow a ſurmiſe ſo falſe the exiſtence of a moment. He aſſerts, and he believes that Mr. Pitt and his honourable friends are too

juſt not to confirm the aſſertion, that the conduct of Mr. Wyvill in publiſhing his correſpondence with Mr. Pitt has not originated in any perſonal quarrel. No time can be fixed as the moment when any ſuppoſed offence was given; nor can any ſort of incivility be ſpecified, which it will not be eaſy for Mr. Wyvill to diſprove. The conjecture has no foundation in fact, and is nothing more than an imaginary ſuppoſition. Mr. Wyvill never received aught at the hands of Mr. Pitt but perſonal civility, with many proofs of his eſteem and regard. For thoſe civilities, and for the eſteem and confidence with which Mr. Pitt was pleaſed to honour him, he returned gratitude and affectionate attachment, increaſed by high reſpect for his political character. In his public demeanour, and in debate with his antagoniſts, Mr. Pitt may be lofty and daring; but in his deportment in private ſociety there is much eaſe and affability: He poſſeſſes a rich fund of benignity and good-nature; and it is not eaſy to approach him in the freedom of friendly intimacy, without feeling a ſtrong predilection for him. Mr. Wyvill loved the Man, and looked up to the Miniſter with reverence and veneration, as a truly Patriot Stateſman, devoted to combat and deſtroy the monſtrous ſyſtem of corruption, and deſtined to the high honour to be the political ſaviour of his country. In the eſtimation of Mr. Wyvill, his connection with Mr. Pitt was the pride and honour of his life: But in the progreſs of his adminiſtration,

adminiſtration, events occurred which inſpired ſome ſerious ſuſpicions of his real intention and views, and gradually lowered this lofty idea of his character. Confidence in a pure and exalted character is a pleaſing ſenſation; it is always quitted with reluctance; and the beginning of this diſtruſt was, to the writer, matter of deep regret and mortification. A painful ſtruggle enſued between habitual prepoſſeſſion and perſonal regard on the one ſide, and growing diſtruſt and public duty on the other. At laſt, by the farther unfolding of his new ſyſtem, in the courſe of a few years, ſuſpicion was gradually changed into conviction, duty overcame the united powers of prepoſſeſſion and perſonal partiality, the connection with Mr. Pitt was reſigned, and the Letter of February 9, 1793, announcing this publication, was laid before the public.

From the ſame uncandid and mercenary quarters may be expected another ſurmiſe equally contrary to fact, and for which not the ſlighteſt appearance of probability can be pleaded. It will probably be ſaid, that Mr. Wyvill is a man chagrined by diſappointment in his ambitious views through Mr. Pitt; that his preſent conduct is dictated by the uſual ſelfiſhneſs of politicians; that he wiſhes thus to recommend himſelf to new connections, and, by their aſſiſtance, to purſue more ſucceſsfully his favourite objects, the acquiſition of profeſſional dignity, or the renewal of family honour. He does not affect to deſpiſe the honours of his profeſſion; he does not

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pretend to think that the recovery of the rank long held by thoſe who preceded him in the poſſeſſion of his patrimony would be no benefit to his family: But theſe acquiſitions have not been the objects of his ambition.

When he commenced his political courſe in Yorkſhire, near ſeventeen years ago, ſome of the Gentlemen of this County, for whoſe public virtue and public views he feels the ſincereſt reſpect, were pleaſed to expreſs their confidence in his integrity. His reply was, that he hoped their confidence would remain undiminiſhed, as long as his ſituation ſhould remain unchanged. He is not totally unexperienced in the world, or abſolutely ignorant of the ways or paſſages, though often dark and intricate, by which promotion may be moſt ſucceſsfully attained. When their confidence had opened to him the door of advancement, he could have availed himſelf of the opportunity, if to profit by his politics had been his deſign. His viſible ſituation is now exactly what it was then; it is, in fact, the ſame ſituation. To this deciſive circumſtance he might truſt the ſure, though ſilent, confutation of the miſrepreſentation he has here anticipated.

But he wiſhes not to leave his innocence reſpecting the ſuppoſed imputation to be inferred by the candour or lenity of his judges: His anſwer ſhall be direct and explicit. He aſſerts, therefore, and once more he truſts Mr. Pitt will confirm the aſſertion, that he has never aſked or accepted from him any favour,

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great or ſmall, either for himſelf or any of his friends. He might juſtly extend the ſame aſſertion to all the other perſons in miniſterial ſtations with whom it has been his fortune to have any intercourſe or connection. The ſuppoſed charge, therefore, that his preſent conduct is the effect of chagrin and diſappointment, muſt be altogether unfounded.

Mr. Wyvill was aware, that there is in the beſt of men a great portion of frailty and fallibility; that the temptations to which they are expoſed in public life are ſtrong and numerous, and that the human heart is apt to be corrupted by the long poſſeſſion of power. Of Mr. Pitt's integrity and wiſdom his eſteem was high; but he knew the extreme difficulty of the enterpriſe he had undertaken: He knew his virtue would be aſſailed by every poſſible temptation which the Court and the Ariſtocracy could employ to intimidate or ſeduce him from his purpoſe; and even Mr. Pitt's virtue might yield to their temptations. It was poſſible that he might ſhrink from the glorious taſk he had engaged in, and, inſtead of perſevering in the ſtruggle to beſtow on his country the ſecure enjoyment of its liberty, under a Government controuled by a reformed and virtuous Repreſentation of the People, he might turn his whole power and credit to ſupport eſtabliſhed abuſes and corruptions. He felt, therefore, that it was poſſible the imperious voice of duty might call upon him to renounce his connection, and to oppoſe him in the proſecution of his new ſyſtem of Adminiſtration.

niſtration. But obligation and independence are incompatible; and public duty can only be performed with unblemiſhed integrity by men who have kept their minds free and uninfluenced by favours. He, therefore, determined to preſerve his freedom and independence, by never mingling with the crowd of ſervile and ſelfiſh men, who ſeek emolument or honours at the levees of a Miniſter: He never ſtooped to ſolicit or accept any miniſterial favour: He is, and always has been, abſolutely free from obligation to the preſent Miniſter, and all his predeceſſors in power; and the reſult of the freedom of judgment thus preſerved is the conduct which has been here explained to the public.

But no proof of innocence can be ſo clear and cogent as to convince the enraged bigot, or reduce the hireling advocate of power to ſilence. No miſrepreſentation is too bold and daring for the front of the hireling; no calumny is too groſs and abſurd for the credulity of the bigot. Even after the ſtatement of theſe facts, the charge of ambition probably will be repeated; but it will meet the ſilence of the injured perſon, and the reprobation of impartial and equitable men. They will have ſeen the proofs of his probity; and, he truſts, they will not ſuffer the opinion eſtabliſhed on the firm foundation of theſe facts to be overturned by the breath of rumour or idle ſurmiſe. Judging of his preſent intention by his paſt conduct, they will not eaſily credit the aſſertion,

aſſertion, that he who hitherto has ſhunned the ſnares of obligation with ſo much care, is now willing to entangle himſelf in them; that the man ſo jealous of his independence, who long ſupported the Miniſter, but never would be his partizan, is now ſeeking to be the vaſſal of ſome new political chieftain, and to ſacrifice the conſcious pride of integrity to the baſe views of a ſelfiſh ambition. It is true he honours the great Stateſmen, and their coadjutors in each Houſe of Parliament, who have oppoſed the new ſyſtem of the Miniſter: He approves their principles; he admires their talents; he applauds their perſeverance; and, as far as his ſlender means permit, he will cooperate with them to ſave the ſinking liberties of his country. But he is not their follower or their partizan; he is, and he will be, the partizan and ſervant to the public alone.

Such is the plea for *the paſt* and *the intended conduct* of the Writer reſpecting Mr. Pitt, and the Paper which he intruſted to his cuſtody. It is conduct which has been haſtily blamed by men, whoſe acquittal and approbation on this explanation of facts and their motives he ſtill covets, and is not without hope to obtain. But if, after this ſtatement, Mr. Pitt's honourable friends alluded to ſhould retain their unfavourable opinion, it is conduct which he will not regret, if men, partial neither to the Miniſter nor himſelf, ſhall pronounce his abſolution. To the judgment of an impartial public, therefore, he commits his caſe; and

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he awaits their deciſion with reſpect, but without fear or perturbation. In the courſe of political buſineſs in which he has been engaged, he is conſcious of having acted with integrity; and on this preſent occaſion it has been his moſt anxious endeavour to do his duty to the public, and at the ſame time to avoid all injuſtice or perſonal diſreſpect to Mr. Pitt. But it is poſſible, that, either from the ſtrength of his zeal, or the weakneſs of his judgment, he may have fallen into ſome error reſpecting the nature of the truſt in queſtion. He is abſolutely unconſcious of it, and he hopes it has not really happened. But if, in the judgment of candid, judicious, and experienced men, he has been thus miſled, and without impropriety cannot publiſh the Paper in queſtion without the conſent of Mr. Pitt, he is not inclined to controvert the judgment of ſuch men, or to perſiſt in his preſent intention againſt their deciſion. He will bow with reverence to the authority of ſuch men, and, in conformity with their opinion, will poſtpone the intended publication: And, he truſts, that with them the rectitude of his intention may plead his excuſe for unperceived and involuntary error. But if he has been fortunate enough to convince them that he holds that Paper in truſt for the public, and that, under the circumſtances ſtated, he has a right to publiſh it, their opinion will confirm his own, and he will, without delay, produce the Paper in diſpute.

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In times like the preſent it cannot be dangerous to draw the attention of the public to the mild, but effectual, plan of Reformation propoſed by Mr. Pitt in the purer period of his Adminiſtration. It was then propoſed, becauſe it was thought expedient to allay the juſt diſſatisfaction of the people: It is more expedient now, becauſe their diſcontent is greater; it has been increaſed by delay and diſappointment, and nothing but redreſs can terminate with ſafety the preſent fermentation. It is the diſpoſition to refuſe redreſs which is dangerous, not the ſtatement of moderate terms on which it may be prudent to aſk it, nor the reſolution to concede when ſuch terms are aſked by an aggrieved people. The plan propoſed by Mr. Pitt would be ſafe for every claſs and order in the State, more eſpecially for thoſe on whom the dread of innovation may be ſuppoſed to operate with greateſt power. It would be ſafe for the Crown; it would be ſafe for the Peerage alſo; it would check the tendency to Republican principles; it would reſcind the uſurpations of a factitious, illegal, and ſelf-created Ariſtocracy, which now domineers over all the conſtituted Authorities; it would reſtore the Peerage to its juſt dignity, as the true and honoured Ariſtocracy of the land; and by rendering the Commons Houſe of Parliament a fair Repreſentative of the nation, it would free the Monarchy from the ſhackles of an unconſtitutional cabal, and at once content the people, and ſecure the permanence of a juſtly-limited

mited monarchical Government. It is a plan calculated to avert the impending dangers of anarchy and despotism; to protect, with equal energy, the property and the liberty of the country; and to preserve alike the internal peace and the constitutional rights of the community, under the incorruptible guard of a reformed and virtuous Representation.

C. WYVILL.

APPENDIX,

NUMBER XXX.

Paper I.

ADVERTISEMENT to the READER.

IF any perſon who may read the ſecond and third Papers in this Collection ſhould doubt the propriety of their publication, the Editor begs leave to refer him to the firſt Part of his Correſpondence with Mr. Pitt, not long publiſhed. In ſeveral of thoſe Letters written to Mt. Pitt by the Editor, particularly in that Letter which is marked Paper 20, the reader who is willing to form a juſt judgment on this occaſion, will find a ſtatement of facts to Mr. Pitt, which down to the date of this Advertiſement has remained unanſwered, and as far as the Editor can learn, uncontradicted by that Right Honourable Gentleman. Theſe facts, therefore, the Editor conceives he has a right to aſſume as facts granted by Mr. Pitt to have been truly ſtated in the Letter alluded to. On this ground, the Editor profeſſes he feels no doubt in his own mind, that he has a right to publiſh the Papers in queſtion. He has alſo had the ſatisfaction to learn the ſentiments of a great variety of perſons on this ſubject, to him ſo very intereſting; and to find the opi-

nion that he has a clear Right to publiſh theſe Papers is nearly univerſal. This has been the deciſion on the above-mentioned ſtatement of facts, made by friends and ſtrangers, by wiſe and worthy men in private ſituations, and by men of the greateſt experience in political buſineſs, who have filled high official ſtations, and may fill them again; and laſt, but not leaſt in weight and value, by ſome of the moſt reſpectable of our Journaliſts, who have joined their ſuffrage to the reſt in affirming the Editor's Right to publiſh theſe Papers. Conceiving the Right to publiſh them to be unqueſtionably eſtabliſhed, the Editor feels, that in times like the preſent, the Duty to publiſh inevitably follows the eſtabliſhment of the Right. That ſome correction of political abuſes is become neceſſary, ſeems now to be generally acknowledged; corruption, as a principle of Government, is more deeply execrated than it ever was; and the extinction of it is more earneſtly purſued, by more numerous bodies of men, conducted by more powerful leaders than before. It is of much importance to the Public therefore, that what was propoſed by the Miniſter in 1785, with a view to that neceſſary correction, ſhould be made known, not indiſtinctly, through the medium of a Summary Explanation by another perſon, but from the exhibition of the Plan itſelf, in the very words of Mr. Pitt.

It would indeed be a vain and fallacious hope, that the Plan ſketched in the ſecond Paper, if it were ſtrictly and literally adhered

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to, would either be ſufficiently extenſive, or ſufficiently prompt in execution, to meet the exigency of this criſis. By the immenſe expenditure of the War with France, the power of the Crown, in a correſponding degree, has been augmented; by their extreme ſufferings, the minds of the People have been ſoured, and thence they have been taught to look for a more efficient and leſs dilatory Reformation than that which Mr. Pitt propoſed in 1785; and with which, at that time, they certainly would have been well ſatisfied. But the principles then laid down, and the meaſures then propoſed by that able Politician, were calculated at once to ſecure the juſt authority of the Crown, and to reſtore the Conſtitutional Rights of the People. Theſe were the ſalutary ends to which his Plan directed; and it was fortunately capable alſo, by a more extenſive application of its principles, to form a fit compromiſe for times, when a more effectual Reform has come to be expected.

In the Papers now laid before the public, it will be found, that Mr. Pitt propoſed to extinguiſh a certain number of the little venal and dependent Boroughs, to reinforce the Repreſentation of the Counties and the Metropolis of England by the transfer of the Right of Repreſentation from the extinguiſhed Boroughs to them; and to augment the Conſtituent Body by imparting the Right of voting to Copyholders, to certain Leaſeholders, and to Houſeholders paying taxes in certain Cities and Towns. If public ſpirit has not ceaſed

to animate the Body of the Nation, if all regard to Prudence is not abandoned by the great majority of the Peerage, it will neither be difficult nor dangerous to extend theſe meaſures ſomewhat farther, and yet not beyond the bounds of a fair and moderate compromiſe. Let the Repreſentation of the Counties and the Metropolis in each of the united Kingdoms be reinforced; let the Right of voting be imparted to Copyholders, certain Leaſeholders, and Houſeholders paying taxes throughout Great-Britain; and let theſe important improvements be effected, not in the ſlow and dilatory way propoſed by Mr. Pitt, but by the prompt and ſpeedy execution of them as meaſures, judged by the Legiſlature, on due deliberation, to be fit without delay for theſe times, and neceſſary for the general weal. To fortify theſe improvements, the ſubſidiary meaſures which were intended by Mr. Pitt, and which are nearly as important as the Reform in the Repreſentation, ought to be adopted at the ſame time; viz. the triennial Election of Parliaments ſhould be reſtored, better modes of Election of Parliaments ſhould be eſtabliſhed, and the Counties, &c. where neceſſary, ſhould be ſubdivided into Diſtricts; it would alſo be expedient, to renew the ancient rule of paying wages to the Repreſentatives; and after theſe changes had been accompliſhed, ſome pecuniary compenſation might be granted to perſons who could ſubſtantiate any juſt ground of complaint from the operation of theſe acts; a ſufficient fund

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for which expence might be found in the ſale of that part of the Crown Lands, from which the Royal Family derives little income, and neither uſe, pleaſure, nor ſecurity in any degree. Let ſuch a mild and yet effectual Reform as this be granted, or let that ſimilar and perhaps better Plan be adopted by Parliament, which Mr. Grey lately offered, and which was ſupported by a band of generous men, to whom we are indebted for the defence of the Conſtitution on its juſt and genuine principles; and it may be pronounced certain, that the dangers which ſurround us will then be averted, that the fear of anarchy and arbitrary power will then vaniſh away, and that a firm and inſuperable barrier will be then oppoſed to the alarming inroads of Deſpotiſm and Licentiouſneſs.

It is but too evident that the fortreſs of our Conſtitution is in a dilapidated ſtate, and ready to overwhelm us beneath its ruins. It behoves us to repair with ſpeed the venerable pile; to labour in this work of Love with unwearied aſſiduity; and with the wiſe counſel and aſſiſtance of thoſe *Maſter Builders* in political architecture, to whom we are already ſo deeply indebted, to fortify and complete the ſpacious Tower of the Conſtitution, in which we and our Poſterity may then reſt ſecurely protected againſt every foe, and ſafe from thoſe ſtorms and tempeſts, which, in the courſe of ages, may aſſail us. The outline only of the Plan here alluded to has yet been given to the Public; when that outline is filled up,

it may be justly hoped it will be found to contain every mild regulation, every well-weighed improvement, which the most cautious prudence can suggest, and which, without impairing its superior efficacy, may give it the greatest probability of a quiet and peaceful execution. Under this impression, the Editor wishes to see the work of Reformation committed to the hands of men like Mr. Grey and his coadjutors, many of whom are men rich in talents and virtues as in fame, and deeply interested, by their immense possessions, in the preservation of order and tranquillity.

C. WYVILL.

BURTON-HALL, *June 12th*, 1797.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Heads *of a* BILL *or* BILLS *for* amending *the* REPRESENTATION; *communicated by the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL, *without a date, but ſuppoſed to have been in March* 1785.

THE ſum of * out of the ſupplies granted to his Majeſty this Seſſion of Parliament to be veſted in certain perſons to be named in the Bill, to be applied, together with the intereſt which may accumulate thereon, to the purpoſes, and in the manner ſpecified in the Bill.

* Probably ſomewhat above 1,000,000l.

These clauſes relative to the application of the money ought perhaps to be in a ſeparate Bill, as they may be conſidered as making the whole a money Bill.

If any Electors of any Borough not containing above Houſes, ſhall petition the Houſe of Commons, ſtating their willingneſs to ſurrender the Right of electing Repreſentatives in any future Parliament on receiving a compenſation for the extinction of ſuch Franchiſe: The ſaid Petition to be referred within a time to

(400)

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* The notes printed in a ſmaller character in the columns of this Paper, were written by Mr. Pitt; thoſe in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Papers were written by the Editor.

be named to a Committee of persons to be chosen in the same manner as the Committee under Mr. Grenville's Bill, who shall proceed to consider the matter of the said Petition, and shall hear evidence touching the Right of all persons claiming to vote for the election of Members for such place, and their willingness or unwillingness to surrender such Rights for the future, and shall report to the House of Commons what proportion of such Electors are consenting to such Petition, and willing to accept the compensation to be fixed in the manner hereafter directed.

The Bill must specify the rule by which the distribution shall be made in each species of Borough.

If two-thirds of the Electors are willing to surrender their Rights, the Committee to proceed to fix the proportion and manner in which the whole sum to be allowed by way of compensation shall be applied and distributed among the persons interested in such Franchise.

If the Committee shall report

port that two-thirds of the perſons who, in their judgement, have the Right of chuſing Repreſentatives for ſuch place, are conſenting to ſuch Petition, and willing to accept the compenſation, ſuch place to be *ipſo facto* diſabled from ſending Members to Parliament from and after the end of the preſent Parliament, (if ſuch report ſhall be made during the preſent Parliament) or from and after the time of ſuch report being received, if the ſame ſhall be in the next or any ſubſequent Parliament, and in the latter caſe, the Members ſitting for the ſame ſhall *ipſo facto* vacate their ſeats.

A ſum equal to the principal and intereſt which ſhall have occurred thereupon of . part of the whole ſum directed to be veſted as aforeſaid, to be paid and diſtributed to ſuch perſon or perſons as ſhall be named in the report of the Committee, to be applied and diſtributed to ſuch perſon or perſons as ſhall be named

named in the report of the Committee, and to be applied and diſtributed in ſuch proportions as ſhall be therein recommended.

Addition to be made of Members in the proportion, order, and manner directed to the following Counties.

On the extinction of any Borough, the addition to be made in the order fixed in the ſchedule annexed to the County or Diſtrict therein ſpecified, and the name of ſuch place as it becomes intitled thereto, to be certified by the Speaker of the Houſe of Commons to the Clerk of the Crown during the continuance of the preſent Parliament, in order that on* the calling of the next and every ſubſequent Parliament a writ ſhould be iſſued to ſuch County or Diſtrict, inſtead of the precept to the Borough on the extinction of which it becomes ſo intitled, or if during the next or any ſubſequent Parliament, then the Speaker to iſſue

* The word (on) is here inſerted by the Editor.

iſſue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown for forthwith making out a writ for an additional Member to be choſen for ſuch County or Diſtrict in the manner herein directed.

2. Whether Counties in general or only the larger? Whether to take place while the addition is going on, or after it is compleat?

Counties to be ſubdivided where neceſſary, into ſmaller Diſtricts.

Copyholders of 40s. per annum to be admitted to vote in County Elections—Leaſe-holders where a certain term of the Leaſe is unexpired.

A plan for regiſtering votes which will ſimplify the proceeding in taking the poll is ſuppoſed to be ſufficiently provided for by another Act already moved for.

Different places of polling to be appointed in convenient parts of each County or Diſtrict.

* After the number of Boroughs before ſpecified has been extinguiſhed, and their Rights transferred to Counties, any remaining Boroughs to be in like manner diſfranchiſed on Petition, in caſe

* Thirty-ſix was the number of Boroughs intended to be diſfranchiſed, in order to augment the Repreſentation of the Counties and the Metropolis, and it was ſpecified by Mr. Pitt in his Speech to Parliament on the 18th of April 1785.—Note by the Editor.

case a sum of* shall have been set apart by Parliament for that purpose, and in case there shall then remain any town, unrepresented of above houses, and the Right of Election to be transferred to the town which shall appear to have the greatest number of houses according to the return from the tax office.

Q. Neighbourhood of London.

Q. Cricklade and Shorcham.

If the majority of Electors in any Borough are proved guilty of corrupt practices at any Election, the said Borough to be disfranchised, and the right of electing Members to be transferred to such County or Counties as stand next in order, while there remain any to which the addition has not been made, and in case such addition to every County shall have been compleated, to such unrepresented town as shall be next intitled according to the provisions of this Act.

Right

* Provision was intended to be made for the disfranchisement of four Boroughs, in order to transfer their Right of Election to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds.—Note by the Editor.

Q. Paying taxes. Right of Election in new Boroughs to be in Houſe-holders aſſeſſed at a certain ſum.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, *Friday, Half paſt Eleven, (ſuppoſed to be April 15th)* 1785.

My dear Sir,

I Encloſe a ſketch of words which ſeem to enumerate as ſhortly as I have found it poſſible, the ſeveral Heads of the Plan of Reform. —It ſeems impracticable to go into detail without making it much longer, and I have ſome doubts, whether even thus, the ſentence is not too involved to be perfectly intelligible without more attention than is given by Common Readers. If any way occurs to you of correcting this defect, I hope you will have the goodneſs to alter it without reſerve.

I am, my dear Sir,
Your's ſincerely,
W. PITT.

Paper IV.

Paper IV.

The Sketch *of a* PREAMBLE *to the* BILL *communicated by the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT, *in the preceding* Letter, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

THAT a transfer of the Right of electing Members to ſerve in Parliament, from ſuch ſmall and inconſiderable Boroughs, as may from time to time voluntarily ſurrender the ſame on receiving a compenſation to be properly diſtributed among the perſons intereſted in ſuch Franchiſe.—In the firſt place to the ſeveral Counties of this Kingdom and the Metropolis, according to a due proportion, until a ſufficient addition ſhall have been made to that Part of the Repreſentation.—And afterwards to ſuch unrepreſented Cities and Towns as may from their importance be beſt entitled to that Privilege and deſirous of receiving the ſame. Together with the admiſſion of Copyholders to the Right of voting in the ſame manner as Freeholders now may in County Elections. And alſo a reaſonable extenſion of the Right of voting in ſuch Cities and Towns where it is at preſent excluſively veſted in ſmall Bodies and Corporations, (ſuch Corporation conſenting thereto and receiving due compenſation for the ſurrender of their excluſive Right) and proper regulations with regard to the Right of voting in Cities and Towns in future, will have a manifeſt tendency to remedy the abuſes and defects

fects in the preſent State of the Repreſentation, and will afford great additional ſecurity to the Rights of the People, and to the Principles of the Conſtitution.

Paper V.

Corrected Clauſes *communicated probably in April* 1785, *by the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to the* Right Honourable William Pitt.

1. WHEREAS certain Boroughs poſſeſſing the Right to return Members to Parliament are ſmall or decayed places, the extinction of whoſe ſaid Right, by ceſſion or voluntary ſurrender, and the transfer of ſuch Right to certain larger or more populous places or diſtricts, would be agreeable to the true ſpirit of the Conſtitution, and would tend to the preſervation, and more equal enjoyment of the Right of Repreſentation: And whereas the Right to return Members to Parliament for ſeveral of the ſaid ſmall or decayed Boroughs is derived, or claimed to be derived,

2. Whether the diſtribution of money to the Electors and other perſons intereſted in Elections for Boroughs of this deſcription might not be regulated thus, viz. in Boroughs where any one Proprietor has an eſtate whence a majority of Voters derive their Right of Suffrage, the ſum of ſixty pounds to each Voter, to enable him to purchaſe a Freehold eſtate of forty ſhillings a year, and the reſidue of the ſum allotted, to the ſaid Proprietor: In all other caſes, the ſaid reſidue to be divided among the Proprietors, in proportion to the number of votes which may be derived from their eſtates reſpectively.

derived, in various modes, ſolely from certain eſtates within the ſame reſpectively;

2. And whereas the Right to return Members to Parliament for ſeveral of the ſaid ſmall or decayed Boroughs is veſted, or claimed to be veſted, by Charter or otherwiſe, ſolely in certain Corporate Bodies, within the ſame reſpectively.

Q. And whereas the diſcontinuance of Corporate eſtabliſhments by voluntary ceſſion, in ſuch ſmall and decayed places, would be convenient to the public.

If any Electors of any Borough in which the ſaid Right is veſted, or claimed to be veſted, by Charter or otherwiſe, ſolely in certain Corporate Bodies within the ſame reſpectively, not containing above Houſes, ſhall petition the Houſe of Commons, ſtating their willingneſs to ſurrender the Right of electing Repreſentatives in any future Parliament, on receiving a compenſation for the extinction of ſuch Franchiſe. The ſaid Petition to be referred within a time to be named to a Committee, who ſhall proceed to conſider the matter of the Petition, and ſhall hear evidence touching

Q. Whether the diſtribution of money among Electors of this deſcription might not be regulated thus, viz. in equal proportions to Electors having equal Rights and Privileges reſpecting Election; in a duplicate proportion to each Elector having the Right of Suffrage, and alſo the Right of creating a Voter, and ſo on, *toties quoties?*

Q. And alſo their Charter of Incorporation.

touching the Right of all perſons claiming to vote at Elections of Members for ſuch place, and their willingneſs or unwillingneſs to ſurrender ſuch Right for the future, and ſhall report, &c.

2. Together with their Charter of Incorporation.

If two-thirds of the Electors are willing to ſurrender ſuch Right, the Committee

2. Together with their Charter of Incorporation.

2. And ſuch Charter of Incorporation.

among the perſons intereſted in ſuch Franchiſe.

Paper VI.

Corrected Clauſe *communicated probably in April* 1785, *by the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to the* Right Honourable William Pitt.

Q. Whether the intended clauſe for diſfranchiſing Boroughs proved guilty of corruption, and adding their Right of Repreſentation to Counties, &c. would not properly follow the clauſes reſpecting this third claſs of Boroughs; itſelf to be followed by the clauſes for eſtabliſhing the order of the addition, &c. After which, the proviſion for transferring the Right of Repreſentation of ſuch Boroughs as may be puniſhed with diſfranchiſement, or voluntarily may ſubmit to it, to unrepreſented towns, when the whole addition ſpecified in the ſchedule of this Act, ſhall have taken place, ſeems properly to follow:

Perhaps the other matter would be better thrown apart into one or more Bills.

AND whereas the Right to return Members to Parliament for ſeveral of the ſaid ſmall or decayed Boroughs is poſſeſſed by Electors, to whom ſuch Right is not derived, or claimed to be derived, ſolely from certain eſtates within the ſame; nor veſted, or claimed to be veſted in them, by Charter or otherwiſe, ſolely as being Members of any Corporate Body within the ſame:

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

Corrected Clauſes *communicated by the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

Or claimed to be derived in various modes.

WHEREAS the Right to return Members to Parliament for certain Boroughs is derived from certain eſtates within the ſame: And whereas ſeveral of the ſaid Boroughs are ſmall or decayed places, the extinction of whoſe Right to return Members to Parliament, by the voluntary ſurrender of the Electors and other perſons intereſted therein; and the transfer of ſuch Right to certain larger or more populous Places or Diſtricts would be agreeable to the true ſpirit of the Conſtitution, and would tend to the preſervation and more equal enjoyment of the Right of Repreſentation.

And alſo, touching the Right of all proprietors of

eſtates, within ſuch place, claiming to be intereſted in the ſaid Election, by virtue of property whence a right to vote for Members for ſuch place is, or may be derived to, or claimed by any perſon or perſons.

And the proprietor or proprietors of eſtates within ſuch place, by virtue of which a right of voting for Members for ſuch place is, or may be derived to a majority of the ſaid Electors.

Provided the inhabitants of at leaſt 400 of the ſaid houſes ſhall have been aſſeſſed, and paid their aſſeſſment to the Poor's Rate within the ſaid place, for

years immediately preceding the ſaid transfer; and alſo provided a majority of the inhabitants ſo aſſeſſed, and having paid their aſſeſſment as aforeſaid, ſhall have petitioned Parliament for the ſaid transfer.

Right

Right of Election in new Boroughs to be in Houſeholders who for a year previous to any Election of Members ſhall have been aſſeſſed, and paid their aſſeſſments to the Poor's Rate within their reſpective Boroughs.

APPENDIX.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. JAMES WILKINSON.

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST. JAMES'S,
Dec. 9, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I Hope Mr. Shore has had an opportunity to ſhew you my firſt Letter, in which I gave him an account of what paſſed moſt material in my converſation with Mr. Pitt on Monday. By appointment, I ſaw him again yeſterday, and had another long and very confidential converſation with him. I truſt you think I have not been haſty in giving my eſteem to Miniſters, or too apt to vouch for the integrity of their intentions. But, on this occaſion, I feel I ſhould act a mean and an ungenerous part if I did not moſt explicitly declare, that if I had entertained any doubt before, reſpecting Mr. Pitt's zeal for the public cauſe, which I certainly did not, theſe converſations muſt have convinced me of the purity of his political character, and his ſincere and particular attachment to the cauſe of Parliamentary Reformation. I have not the ſmalleſt doubt that

that he will exert himſelf to the utmoſt of his power in the approaching Seſſion of Parliament, and put forth his whole power and credit *as a Man* and *as a Miniſter*, *honeſtly* and *boldly* to carry a plan of Reform, by which our liberties will be placed on a footing of permanent ſecurity. I am happy to add, the proſpect of ſucceſs is improved beyond our utmoſt expectations.

In conſequence of this ſecond converſation, the idea I expreſſed to Mr. Shore, of the propriety, and even neceſſity, of a County Meeting for Yorkſhire this winter, is much confirmed. It is due not only to the public cauſe, and to that conſiſtency of character which every man of honour wiſhes to preſerve, but in juſtice alſo to a Miniſter, who, for the public good, is reſolved to act ſo nobly diſintereſted a part.—I have only time to add,

I am ever, my dear Sir,
Moſt cordially your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* General HALE.

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST. JAMES'S,
Dec. 13*th*, 1784.

My dear General,

NOTWITHSTANDING our very unlucky diverſity of ſentiment upon one queſtion of very inferior moment, I cannot entertain a moment's doubt but the intelligence I have to communicate will be moſt agreeable to you.

Before I left England, which, for reaſons you probably may have heard, I had intended doing for ſome months, I thought it due to the common cauſe to wait upon Mr. Pitt. I ſaw him on Monday and Wedneſday laſt: On both thoſe days I had much confidential converſation with him reſpecting his ideas of Parliamentary Reformation, and the moſt adviſeable means of effecting it. But, confidential as it was, I think myſelf authorized to declare to you, that he will moſt certainly bring his Propoſitions on early in the next Seſſion; that he will ſupport them to the utmoſt of his ſtrength, and put forth his whole power and credit, *as a Man* and *as a Miniſter*, *honeſtly* and *boldly*, to carry ſuch a meliorated ſyſtem of Repreſentation as may place the Conſtitution on a footing of permanent ſecurity. I am happy to add, that the proſpect of ſucceſs is improved

improved much beyond our moſt ſanguine expectations.

If, in conſequence of this encouraging intelligence, Gentlemen ſhould think of meeting at York this winter, in order to give their ſupport to a meaſure ſo beneficial to the country, I ſhould be ſorry to be abſent. Here, therefore, I mean to ſtay till the queſtion be aſcertained, whether a County Meeting will be held this winter in Yorkſhire. Before this converſation with Mr. Pitt, I had uniformly and ſtrenuouſly declared my opinion to all our friends with whom I had an opportunity to converſe, that after his declaration in the Houſe of his intention to agitate the ſubject this winter, we are bound by every tie of public duty and regard to private character, and that conſiſtency we all wiſh to maintain, to endeavour to call the County together to ſupport the meaſure; and however irkſome and inconvenient it may be to me perſonally to attend, no ſuppoſable degree of fatigue or inconvenience ſhall deter me from once more joining thoſe friends, with whom I am proud to have acted ſo long, in behalf of the common cauſe. I beg my beſt compliments to your Ladies; and am, with great reſpect,

Dear General,

Your moſt ſincere and faithful humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Sir THO. DUNDAS *(now* Lord DUNDAS).

NEROT's HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST JAMES's,
Dec. 20th, 1784.

Dear Sir,

AFTER having performed, in ſome tolerable degree, what my duty to the Yorkſhire Committee required, I now take the earlieſt opportunity to communicate to you the reſult of my late interview with Mr. Pitt.

After much converſation on the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation, he authorized me to aſſert, that he means to bring that ſubject before the Houſe of Commons as ſoon as poſſible in the next Seſſions; that he will ſupport his intended Propoſitions to the utmoſt of his ſtrength, and exert his whole power and credit, *as a Man* and *as a Miniſter*, *honeſtly* and *boldly*, to carry ſuch a meliorated ſyſtem of Repreſentation, as may place the Conſtitution on a footing of permanent ſecurity.

If the true Britiſh ſpirit of liberty ſhould be rouſed in Yorkſhire, as I truſt it will, by a declaration like this, and a County Meeting ſhould be called in order to ſupport ſo neceſſary a meaſure, I truſt we ſhall have the ſupport of Sir Thomas Dundas; whom I have long conſidered as one of the moſt zealous and truly diſintereſted friends to the propoſed Reform,

Reform, and by whoſe kind aſſiſtance, principally, Unanimity which alone can render ſuch a Meeting effectual may be preſerved.

I am, dear Sir, with great reſpect,

Your moſt faithful humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

NUMBER

NUMBER XXXI.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Honourable C. J. Fox *to* Sir Robert Smith, Bart. Chairman *of the* Eſſex Committee.

Sir,

IN obedience to an order of the Weſtminſter Committee, I have the honour of tranſmitting to you a Copy of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the City and Liberties of Weſtminſtet, held in Weſtminſter Hall on Wedneſday the 2d inſtant; as alſo a Copy of certain Reſolutions of the Weſtminſter Committee, met at the King's-Arms Tavern, Palace Yard, the ſame day.

By the laſt of theſe Reſolutions you will perceive how deſirous the Committee are of acting in concert with all other Committees appointed for purpoſes ſimilar to thoſe for which they are themſelves inſtituted.

You will give me leave to obſerve, that if Unanimity was a deſirable object in the Petitions themſelves, it becomes much more neceſſary in the formation of thoſe Plans of Aſſociation which the ſeveral Committees have been

been directed to prepare and lay before the adjourned Meetings of their reſpective Counties and Cities; and that nothing is ſo likely to produce ſuch an Unanimity as a free and unreſerved communication of ſentiments, either by letter or conference, or both, among thoſe who wiſh to promote the objects of the Petitions.

I have the honour to be, with the greateſt reſpect, Sir,

Your moſt obedient and
moſt humble ſervant,
C. J. FOX,
Chairman of the
Weſtminſter Committee.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Honourable C. J. Fox *to* Sir Robert Smith, Bart. Chairman *of the* Eſſex Committee.

Sir,

I HAD yeſterday the honour of laying before the Weſtminſter Committee your Letter of the 7th inſtant, as alſo the Reſolve of the Eſſex Committee; and am directed to aſſure you, that there is nothing the Committee have more at heart than that a good underſtanding ſhould ſubſiſt between the different Committees of the Kingdom, ſo that they may co-operate for the general good.

With

With reſpect to the ſuggeſtion of ſending Delegates to London, it is a meaſure they would highly approve, if it ſhould appear to be agreeable to the ſeveral Committees; but would by no means wiſh ſuch a meaſure to be preſſed upon thoſe Committees to which it might be inconvenient. A General Meeting of ſuch Delegates in London would, in their opinion, be the moſt deſirable of all meaſures; but they think a plan of that conſequence ought not to be attempted, till we can be ſure of a pretty general concurrence of the different Counties, and eſpecially of the County of York, which has taken ſo honourable a lead in this great buſineſs. In the mean-time, thoſe Counties, Cities, &c. who may think fit to ſend Delegates to London, may be aſſured that the Weſtminſter Committee will think themſelves very happy in having an opportunity of conferring with them upon meaſures neceſſary for the great purpoſes at which we all aim.—In regard to the other object of eſtabliſhing a communication independent of the Poſt-Office, they think it leſs material, and attended with great difficulty; but would be very glad to hear any ideas the Eſſex Committee may have upon the ſubject.

The Marquis of Carmarthen was on Tueſday laſt diſmiſſed from his office of Lord Lieutenant of the Eaſt-Riding of the County of York, for no other apparent reaſon than that of his having ſignified his approbation of the Meeting at York; and yeſterday the Earl of Pembroke, who on Tueſday laſt voted for a

motion

motion relative to the controul of Public Expenditure, the examination of Sinecures, Penſions, &c. reſigned his office of Lord of the Bedchamber to his Majeſty. I mention theſe circumſtances as ſerving to ſhow, that there is great reaſon to fear, that the objects of the Petitions are as diſagreeable to the Court, as they are certainly neceſſary for the ſalvation of the Country.

I have the honour to be, with the greateſt reſpect, Sir,

Your moſt obedient and
moſt humble ſervant,
C. J. FOX,
Chairman of the
Weſtminſter Committee.

ST. JAMES'S STREET,
Feb. 10, 1780.

Paper III.

Letter *from* Earl FITZWILLIAM *to* WILLIAM CHALONER, Eſq; Chairman *of the* Meeting *of the* County *of* York.

Sir,

I Send by the Newcaſtle Fly 25 copies of Mr. Burke's Speech; and have incloſed with them a little Pamphlet, intitled "Facts," well worth the peruſal. The packet is directed to be ſent from North-Allerton by the Giſborough Poſtman, by which means, I truſt, it will get ſafe to the Priory.—I delayed

ſending

ſending them two days, that I might give you an account of the reception the Bill met with at the Committee.

After the motion "for the Order of the Day" had been made, Mr. Rigby expreſſed a concern at being precluded thereby, from taking the ſenſe of the Houſe upon a Queſtion which he had in his hand, that he had penned himſelf, and had ſhown to no perſon whatſoever, upon the power of Parliament to take back, or in any way to interfere in the application of that income which Parliament had ſettled upon the King at his acceſſion, for the purpoſe of his Civil Liſt: Mr. Rigby declaring his own opinion, that Parliament had no ſuch power.—The Friends of the Bill fired at this, as diſputing a principle, which was in fact admitted on all hands, by the unanimity of the ſecond reading; that ſtage, according to the practice of the Houſe, being the period at which the principle of every Bill was diſputed: but if there was any man, who could heſitate about ſo clear and ſo neceſſary a doctrine, it was high time to bring that point to a deciſion, or the Bill would be clogged in every ſtep by that principle not being admitted. They therefore oppoſed the motion for the Order of the Day, to give room for this propoſition of Mr. Rigby to be firſt decided, and the Miniſters ſupported the motion, to prevent the deciſion; and upon a diviſion, the Miniſters carried their object by 205 to 199—of courſe, the Houſe reſolved itſelf into a Committee, and a Debate enſued upon the

firſt Clauſe, for knocking off one of the three Secretaries. The Miniſters oppoſed the Clauſe, not by ſhowing the neceſſity of, or any advantage derived from a third Secretary, but upon that damnable doctrine, that "Parliament had no right to meddle with thoſe matters, but in caſe of *Abuſe proved*." On the Diviſion, againſt the Clauſe 208, for it 201. Thus, my good Sir, you ſee nothing can be done in Parliament. You muſt take care of yourſelves—But if you do, ſucceſs will aſſuredly crown your efforts. Adhere ſtrictly to one object, to reduce the Influence of the Crown, as the true cauſe of every evil. In this, every part of the Kingdom ſeems united; but upon other objects you will certainly be divided; in which caſe, you will endanger your ſucceſs; and if you do not ſucceed now, and the King ſhould prove victorious over his People, he will be abſolute.

A better Repreſentation is not only deſirable, but in a manner neceſſary; but of all things the moſt difficult to be brought about. No Plan, decently practicable, has yet been deviſed; and till ſuch is ready, every public reſolution upon the ſubject tends more to miſchief than to good, becauſe it alarms, and does not ſatisfy. But I ſhall trouble you again with the farther progreſs of the Bill. If the next Clauſe is thrown out, (relative to the Board of Trade) in my opinion the buſineſs

ſineſs is up, and the Father ſhould ſtrangle his own Child.

I have the honour to be, with great eſteem,

Your moſt obedient

humble ſervant,

FITZWILLIAM.

STRATTON-STREET,
March 9, 1780.

The Dundas's were in the Minority on both Queſtions.*

* There are in the Editor's poſſeſſion two Letters of Earl Fitzwilliam's to W. Chaloner, Eſq; this dated on the 9th of March, 1780; the other, on the 21ſt of March, 1780. They were communicated to the Editor by Mr. Chaloner, who conſidered the firſt as clearly being a Letter of a public nature; and indeed, from the Contents of the Letter itſelf, this is ſufficiently evident. This Letter, therefore, the Editor thought himſelf bound to publiſh, on the ſame principle which induced him to publiſh the Letters of the Marquis of Lanſdown and Mr. Pitt, viz. that he might with impartiality perform his duty to the Public. The other Letter of the 21ſt of March, is not clearly a Letter of a public nature, and therefore it is kept back from public inſpection. It is hoped this explanation, in the judgment of Earl Fitzwilliam, will be a ſufficient juſtification of the Editor's conduct in publiſhing the Letter in queſtion.

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Earl of SHELBURNE *to* JOHN AUDRY, Eſq; Chairman *of the* Wiltſhire Committee; *read at a* General Meeting *of the* County *of* Wilts, *held at the* Devizes, *on* Wedneſday, *March* 29*th*, 1780.

March 26, 1780.

Sir,

I AM very much mortified that it is not in my power to perform a duty I feel ſo very agreeable and honourable, as that of attending the Committee of Correſpondence and Aſſociation at Devizes on Tueſday next, and the Meeting of the County which is to be held the ſubſequent day.

The early negative put upon the Inquiry into the Public Expenditure in the Houſe of Lords; the refuſal of any account of Places and Penſions held by Members of that Houſe; the violence done to the Conſtitution by the arbitrary removal of the Earl of Pembroke from the Lord Lieutenancy of our County, (an Office which his Anceſtors have ſo long and ſo honourably held, I believe, from its firſt inſtitution) for no other poſſible cauſe but for having voted as a Free Man upon a Public Queſtion; as well as by that of the Marquis of Carmarthen from the Lord Lieutenancy of the Eaſt Riding of Yorkſhire:

And in the Houſe of Commons, the proceeding to lay new burthens, without taking

any, much leſs *effectual* œconomical meaſures, in direct oppoſition to the Prayer of our Petition, as well as thoſe of other Counties; the number of Taxes propoſed to be ſuperadded; ſome bearing very hard upon our County in particular, namely, that which regards the private brewery, beſides the addition made to the ſevereſt of all duties, that on Salt, when it is certain that triple the ſum might have been, and may ſtill be produced from the ſuppreſſion of unneceſſary offices, ſavings in the mode of expenditure, and other œconomical Reforms, which require only integrity to accompliſh; the difficulties which have been thrown in the way of a very able Plan of Reform now before the Houſe;—no enquiry made into exorbitant contracts;—Accomptants ſuffered to remain with large public balances at their own diſpoſal; the meaſure for a Commiſſion of Accounts taken out of independent and diſintereſted hands, and aſſumed by the Authors of our Diſtreſs, in ſuch a manner as to mock every idea of Parliamentary Independency, or Popular Enquiry; no expectation offered by the Miniſter, except a poſſible reverſionary reduction of thoſe Places which do not contribute to the Influence of the Crown, in anſwer to the Petitions deſiring an abolition of thoſe that DO: and withal, a poſition laid down as fundamental by the Supporters of the Court, and Miniſters in both Houſes, that the Influence of the Crown is not dangerous to the Conſtitution, and is not

increased, in contradiction to the evidence of our senses.

Those facts, I apprehend, can leave little doubt with any Freeholder who approved of the former Meeting, of the necessity of immediately associating for the accomplishment of those indispensable objects stated in our Petition in as strong terms as constitutional language can dictate.

But I am sensible that it must occur to our County, as it has already done to others, to consider what steps can be taken to obtain that Reform of which our present Parliament gives so little hope, acting even under all its present circumstances; or what security can be had for preserving in future what we may have the good fortune to obtain in this moment of exigence. It gives me great satisfaction to find, that it has occurred to none to have recourse to other means than those purely civil, as well as strictly constitutional. Though no one feels with more concern the abuses which have taken place in the Militia, and particularly the departure from the ancient, true, fundamental, and till of late years, invariable Militia Principles of keeping them within their Counties, except in case of actual invasion (their present distant and unnecessary removals serving only to assimilate them to the Standing Army in principle and in habits, not in discipline) I still have that confidence in our Army as well as Militia, as at present constituted, that I hope neither are yet so

eſtranged from a love of the Conſtitution, as to give any juſt apprehenſion of Danger.

Two meaſures have offered themſelves for conſideration, which, inaſmuch as they affect the Houſe of Commons merely, come unqueſtionably within the province of our County-Meeting, and cannot by any miſrepreſentation be conſtrued to ariſe from improper motives: The one is to ſhorten the duration of Parliaments; the other to equalize the Repreſentation, which at preſent confeſſedly bears no proportion either to the number of People, the quantum of Property, or the proportion of Public Contribution; nor does it hold to any rank or deſcription whatever; but is the mere child of accident or intrigue.

The People of England, I conceive, have, and always had a clear, unalienable, indefeaſible right to the one, and to the other, in their fulleſt extent, upon a ſtronger ground than that of any Act or Acts of Parliament. That 'the Houſe of Commons muſt be free in every circumſtance of its Conſtitution,' is the foundation ſtone of our Government. The ſame right which the People had formerly, and through the bleſſing of God, exerted ſo happily for us their poſterity, to have Parliaments *frequently holden*, when they were aggrieved by the Crown's with-holding them, now goes to have them *frequently and equally choſen*, when it appears, through the length of the duration, and the inequality of the Repreſentation, that they are ſtill more aggrieved than they were formerly by the

total

total want of them. And if this ſhould appear to be the ſenſe of a fair majority of the People, collected together, either in County Meetings, or in any other conſtitutional mode, there can be no doubt but that the proper Laws will be immediately enacted to reſtore the Conſtitution to its proper principles in theſe particulars; for it is not to be preſumed, that the preſent defective Repreſentation would venture to oppoſe the manifeſt ſenſe of thoſe from whom they derive all their authority, much leſs that the Houſe of Lords, conſtituted as it is, or the Crown could be ſo ill-adviſed as to deny their concurrence and aſſent to ſo ſalutary a Reform, in a part of the Conſtitution which more particularly belongs to the Democracy.—Theſe principles are ſo unalterably engraven in my mind, that I ſhould hold myſelf criminal in the ſuppreſſion of them when called for. It will be for the County to judge, whether they will proceed to Declaratory Reſolutions on the ſubject of them, and then wait till the ſenſe of the reſt of the Kingdom is ſo far known; or whether they will be contented finally without puſhing the Right of the People to its utmoſt extent, by inſiſting upon an Annual Election, and a total change of the Repreſentation. There are men, of whoſe integrity there is but one voice, and whoſe judgment deſerves every attention throughout England, who foreſee more inconvenience than, I confeſs, I do in the whole extent of theſe Propoſitions. Beſides, the conſequences of great changes have

been, in all times, so uncertain, that it may be most prudent to avoid them; especially as, in the present instance, I am free to own, that so far as I am capable of judging, every end may be obtained by the repeal of the Septennial Act, and a reasonable addition of County Members, chosen by districts, or under some regulation which might preclude all unnecessary expence. But I shall most willingly subscribe to the discretion and wisdom of the Meeting, in this and every other consideration of expediency; and I dare rely upon the generosity and candour of the County and the Committee, that they will put a just interpretation upon the liberty I take; meaning to assume no more than what might become any other Freeholder; submitting my unreserved sentiments in time of distress, to their better judgment; as I cannot have the honour of attending in person, when I might explain myself more particularly upon each part, as occasion might require. I have nothing so much at heart as to prove the sincerity and consistency of my conduct upon all occasions; but most of all in the County of my residence, and among a neighbourhood whose good opinion must in the end make the comfort and honour of my life.

I have the honour to be, with great respect and consideration, Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

SHELBURNE.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Hon. C. J. FOX.

BURTON-HALL, *near* BEDALE, *May* 1, 1780.

Sir,

I Deferred acknowledging the honour of your letter, with an account of the proceedings at the late General Meeting of Weſtminſter incloſed, hoping I ſhould be able to attend the York Committee on the 3d of this month, and ſhould have the ſatisfaction to concur officially in a Reſolution of thanks from that Body for your obliging communication. But finding myſelf ſtill too much indiſpoſed to engage again in public buſineſs, I tranſmitted your letter and the other papers to the Committee by yeſterday's poſt. I truſt the adoption of the Yorkſhire Form of Aſſociation by the City of Weſtminſter will be conſidered by the Gentlemen at York as an event of the utmoſt importance to ſecure that unanimity which you have ſo properly recommended in your circular letter,* and without which indeed the people could have little reaſon to expect ſucceſs in the preſent arduous, though pacific ſtruggle to reſtore the Conſtitution.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Hon. C. J. Fox.

* For this circular letter, ſee Paper 15, at page 221 of the firſt vol. of this Collection.

NUMBER

NUMBER XXXII.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Sir ROBERT SMITH, Bart.

York, *Jan.* 4, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE incloſed inſtructions to the Deputies of this Committee were yeſterday agreed to by the largeſt Meeting which we have yet had; 60 Gentlemen were preſent. The Deputies are Mr. Shore, Sir James Norcliffe, and myſelf. An Addreſs from the Committee to the Electors of the Counties, Cities, &c. was alſo unanimouſly agreed to; but, on account of its great length, it is impoſſible to tranſmit a copy of it at preſent. That piece, with the inſtructions, will ſoon be printed, and ſent throughout the kingdom.—From the great diſtance of this County from London, it is very inconvenient to Gentlemen to attend a Meeting there. It was therefore found adviſable to keep to our firſt number of Deputies.

I am, Sir, with great reſpect,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Sir R. Smyth, Bart.

Paper II.

Letter *from* Viſcount MAHON, *the* Rev. Dr. RICHARD RYECROFT, *and the* Rev. EDMUND MARSHALL, Deputies *for the* County *of* Kent, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

HARLEY-STREET, *March* 16, 1781.

Sir,

AS the important queſtion will probably be agitated in the Meeting of Deputies, "Whether the Petition to be preſented to Parliament ſhould be preſented by us on behalf of ourſelves, or ſhould be preſented by us as Agents and Delegates;" we think it neceſſary to inform you (and through you to inform the Meeting) that we neither can, nor will join in any Petition to Parliament, to be preſented by us in the name of *other Electors* of England. We have the honour to be, with high reſpect, Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervants,

MAHON.
RD. RYECROFT.
EDM. MARSHALL.

To the Rev. C. Wyvill, Chairman of the Meeting of Delegates.

Paper III.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Viſcount MAHON.

GEORGE-STREET, *March* 18, 1781.

My Lord,

I Cannot ſend your Lordſhip the incloſed official letter unaccompanied by a few lines of private communication. The debate yeſterday was a very unequal one; the opinion of the Meeting ran ſtrongly for retaining the paſſage your Lordſhip objected to. The only grounds on which I could argue for ſtriking it out, was the danger of diviſion among ourſelves, and the advantage it might afford the Enemy, when carried into the Houſe, to attack the Committee as unconſtitutional and tending to danger, a queſtion I ſhould be ſorry to truſt to the deciſion of the preſent Houſe at a time of ſuch national langubr and dejection. The legality of acting as Deputies I not only conſider as incontrovertably certain, but I am alſo perſuaded, that without ſome ſuch meaſures for preſerving a ſyſtematical union amongſt the people, their efforts to redreſs public grievances, in a pacific way, muſt ever be unſucceſsful. But conſidering it as a matter of prudence, I am of opinion with your Lordſhip, that it would have been wiſe to ſtrike out any paſſage which is liable to be conſtrued as a claim to act by deputed authority. It would have been wiſe in the Meeting

ing of Deputies to have been contented silently to introduce the precedent, and to wait for times of more public spirit to avow the right. But the opinion of Mr. Dunning in favour of retaining the contested expression as a common one in petitions where no pretensions to deputed authority could be intended, determined the Meeting not to give up the passage. I was sorry for it; and if his opinion should not on farther consideration have equal weight with your Lordship, I shall be most truly concerned indeed.* If dissentions in our small band connot be prevented, if a separation must take place on grounds like this, and in times of so much danger to the public, I for one must give up all hope of preserving our Constitution; but I say this to one who feels as warmly for the liberties of his Country as any man in it; I therefore trust it will

* Mr. Dunning was unwilling to support the Petition of the Deputies to the House of Commons unless the disputed expression that they Petitioned in behalf of themselves *and others* were admitted. His reason was, that a Petition in behalf of themselves alone probably would be objected to, as being too insignificant from the paucity of signatures, to occupy the attention of Parliament; and on that ground it was possible, it would not be allowed to lie upon their Table. He might think too, that by retaining the disputed expression, which was a usual one in cases of inclosure, &c. a more favourable precedent for the People acting by Deputation would be established. The Kentish Deputies, satisfied by Mr. Dunning's Reasons, acceded to the Measure adopted by the Meeting: Whose Petition, unanimously signed, was presented by Sir G. Savile, supported by Mr. Dunning, and admitted by Parliament, to be laid upon their Table. It is evident, however, that the opposition of the Kentish Deputies arose from their earnest desire that the line of moderation should be adhered to, and that any appearance in the Petition of a claim by the Petitioners to the character of Deputies should be avoided; because such a claim was understood to be offensive to Parliament.

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not be impoſſible for him to accede to the Petition as thus explained by the Meeting.

The Petition will be laid before the Deputies at the St. Alban's Tavern to-morrow for ſigning; Sir G. Savile will preſent it in a few days after; I therefore thought it material to communicate what I had to ſay to your Lordſhip with as much diſpatch as poſſible.

I am, my Lord,
With high reſpect,
And moſt ſincere regard,
Your faithful humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Viſcount MAHON; *alſo with the neceſſary* Alterations, *to the* Rev. Dr. RYECROFT, *and the* Rev. EDMUND MARSHALL.

My Lord,

THE letter ſigned by your Lordſhip, by Dr. Ryecroft, and Mr. Marſhall, and addreſſed to me, as Preſident of the Meeting of Deputies, was yeſterday laid before that reſpectable body; and I am directed by them to repreſent to your Lordſhip, and your worthy Colleagues, that the Petition adopted by the Deputies does, in their judgment, ſtand clear of any objections which might be ſtated againſt a Petition, ſigned by perſons claiming

the

the character and authority of Delegates or Deputies. The following extract from their Petition is the only paſſage in it which has the moſt diſtant appearance of advancing that claim.

"Your Petitioners therefore, *on behalf of themſelves and others*, their fellow-ſubjects, who joined with your Petitioners in the ſaid Petitions, appealing to the juſtice," &c.

But as ſimilar expreſſions are uſual in Petitions for the incloſure of commons, &c. by perſons who aſſume no deputed authority, the Meeting of Deputies conceive, that, in fair conſtruction, the paſſage in queſtion is not liable to the imputation of conveying any claim to the character of Delegates. And they reſt with complete aſſurance in this opinion, finding it confirmed by one of the greateſt law authorities in the kingdom; I mean, by Mr. Dunning.

On theſe grounds I am directed to expreſs the hope, and the moſt earneſt wiſh of the Meeting that their Petition may yet receive the ſupport of your Lordſhip's ſignature, and that of the other Deputies for the reſpectable County of Kent.

I have the honour to be, &c.

C. WYVILL.

GEORGE-STREET,
March 18, 1781.

Paper V.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* John Dunning, Esq.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE the pleasure to assure you that Sir George Savile is pretty well recovered, and will probably be able to attend the House, to make the next motion on the Deputies Petition; viz. to refer it to a Committee. For obvious reasons, it is of great consequence that you and Sir George should act together on that occasion; and he certainly will co-operate with you, if no unfortunate relapse should make such an exertion impracticable. If unhappily that should be the case, Mr. Duncombe will be in town about the middle of next week; and it will be matter of deliberation in that state of things, whether it will be prudent to make the motion for a Committee by Mr. Duncombe, seconded by yourself; or to postpone it. In all considerations of that kind, your opinion, and that of our other experienced Friends in Parliament whom you may consult upon the subject, must be decisive with the Deputies. They will not be able to meet, and confer with you upon it; they will, I believe, break up their Assembly to-day; but whatever may be determined by you, the Deputies will rely with the most perfect confidence in your advice, and in the

prudence

prudence and propriety of whatever reſolution you may form upon their buſineſs.—But I truſt you will not be driven to decide upon the prudence of advancing another ſtep without Sir George on the ground of our Petition. I flatter myſelf there is no reaſon to think he will not be able to act, as I am ſure he anxiouſly wiſhes to do. He only cannot authorize me yet to fix any thing deciſively with you.

If the motion for a Committee ſhould unexpectedly be carried, there are ſo many juſt exceptions to be taken, in the preſent management of the public money, that I conceive the difficulty which may ariſe in the progreſs of the buſineſs before the Committee will be, not to find abuſes to complain of, but to determine what abuſe to begin with, where ſo many demand correction. Two motions you have already ſuggeſted; with either of which the attack might very properly commence. The Loan might poſſibly afford a third; or ſomething might be done upon the ground of the Reports from the preſent Commiſſion of Accounts. But this it will be time enough for you and Sir George Savile to ſettle, when you have carried the motion for a Committee. It is enough at preſent, that matter proper for the conſideration of the Committee, if it ſhall be obtained, may eaſily be found.

I ſhall leave London this afternoon, meaning to return home to Burton-Hall, near Bedale, in Yorkſhire, where I ſhall hope to have the honour of hearing from you, if any

advice or information ſhould occur, which you may think material to communicate.

I am, dear Sir, with high reſpect,
Your moſt faithful
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

P. S. If Sir George ſhould not be able to attend upon this buſineſs, I find, on converſing with him, he is clearly of opinion, that it is of great conſequence to bring on the debate, and obtain a deciſion of the Houſe upon the ſubject. He ſeems to think it is an object of much greater importance, that *the thing* ſhould by no means be omitted, than it is, *by whom* it ſhould be done.

Paper VI.

Letter *from* JOHN DUNNING, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, *1ſt May*, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I Should not have failed to trouble you with an earlier acknowledgment of both your favours, (the firſt of which I found here on my return to Town laſt Wedneſday) if I had not been induced to hope that I ſhould be able by this poſt to have communicated to you the fate of the Petition, which Sir George

Savile

Savile had propoſed to bring under the conſideration of the Houſe *this day*.——But it ſeems, when he imparted to the Houſe yeſterday his intention of doing ſo, he found it to be the general ſenſe, that a longer notice would be proper, and a probable means of procuring a larger attendance. I came into the Houſe juſt as the converſation upon the ſubject was cloſed, too late to ſuggeſt, if I had been myſelf informed, which in truth I was not, that next Tueſday (this day ſe'nnight) to which the buſineſs is adjourned, happens to be in a Newmarket Week; by which, I fear, we ſhall loſe more than we have any hopes of gaining by the adjournment; eſpecially as Summer is coming on by ſuch rapid ſtrides as to be daily diminiſhing the number of thoſe who have no intereſted motive to ſtay longer within the ſmoke of London.—This, however, is of leſs importance than it would be, if we had flattered ourſelves with ſanguine hopes of any other effect of the Petition than that, in which you cannot be diſappointed, of ſhewing that the general deſpondence is not univerſal; and that there are ſtill ſome men left, who will be ready to ſtep forth again in the Public Service, if an opportunity ſhall be given to ſerve it effectually.

Whatever may be the ultimate iſſue of all this, ſuch efforts in ſuch a cauſe deſerve, and ſooner or later will receive the Public's grateful acknowledgments; of which no man has, in my opinion, a fairer claim to ſo large

a ſhare as he whom I have the honour of addreſſing. *

I am, with great reſpect and eſteem,
Dear Sir,
Your very humble ſervant,
J. DUNNING.

Paper VII.

* It may be here remarked by a Reader, neither faſtidious, nor hoſtile to Political Reformation, that in this, and the five preceding Letters, little more is contained than ſome minute particulars reſpecting the meaſures of two Meetings now nearly forgotten. And this objection is at leaſt as applicable to this Letter of Mr. Dunning's as to ſome of thoſe which precede it. From the nature of the ſubject, it unavoidably conſiſts of a detail to which even his uncommon powers could have imparted nothing which could intereſt the General Reader. And by ſuch it may be ſaid, This Letter may have been written by the famous Dunning, the profound Lawyer, the acute and animated Speaker, and the incorruptible Member of a moſt corrupt Aſſembly. There is in it, "Magni Nominis Umbra." It has his ſignature, and it has nothing elſe that is of importance, except, indeed, to the Editor himſelf. Why then ſhould the Book be ſwelled with Papers which apparently might have been ſpared without inconvenience?

To this objection the Editor replies, That this Collection of Papers is not offered to the General Reader; it is intended for the peruſal of men, who, knowing the value of their Rights, and feeling the danger of their entire extinction, may now wiſh to be truly informed by what means the undue Influence of the Crown was ſucceſsfully oppoſed, and the progreſs towards Deſpotic Power was checked, about the middle of the preſent reign. There are who think, as the Editor thinks, that ſince the period alluded to, the Crown has acquired a more alarming Influence than ever, and that the Conſtitution has been too much injured in the moſt material part of the Fabric to ſtand long as it is: that it muſt undergo a ſubſtantial repair, or it muſt ſoon ſink in ruins. For ſuch men as theſe the details of this Collection are intended; and to them, the Editor truſts, they will not be unacceptable.

Reſpecting the Meetings of Deputies held in 1780 and 1781, he has been anxious to recover, and to lay before them every minute particular; becauſe the neceſſary correction of abuſes ought to be effected by popular application to Parliament: and in ſuch Meetings the wiſhes o fthe People with the leaſt difficulty may be collected, and applied to Parliament with the greateſt and moſt continued effect.

In

Paper VII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Sir ROBERT SMITH, Bart.

BURTON-HALL, *June 5th*, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE incloſed account of the Proceedings at the laſt Meeting of our Yorkſhire Committee, includes a more correct copy of their Deputies' Report than that which I hope you received ſome poſts ago. I have the pleaſure to aſſure you, the reſolution to perſevere and firmly ſupport the Aſſociation of this County was the clear and unanimous ſenſe of the Meeting; which, in point of numbers, and weight of property, was certainly one of the moſt reſpectable which has been held at York. I truſt, the firmneſs of the Aſſociated Counties will in the end prevail, by the acceſſion of the Nobility; if the eager advocates for Annual Parliaments, and the right of Univerſal Suffrage, can be in-

In this view, theſe Letters reſpecting thoſe Meetings in 1780 and 1781, are not wholly unimportant. Some of them ſhow, the orderly manner of their Proceeding, and their ſtrict attention to Parliamentary uſage; and others ſhow, what it is very material to ſhow, that ſuch men as Sir George Savile and Mr. Dunning approved thoſe Deputations; conſidered them and their meaſures to be agreeable to Law and the Conſtitution; and in Parliament gave their firm and moſt anxious ſupport to the Petition of the ſecond Deputation.

To ſeveral Papers in other Numbers of this Collection, the objection here conſidered, may be thought applicable. But in thoſe caſes alſo, the ſame or ſimilar reaſoning, it is hoped, will furniſh a ſufficient juſtification.

duced to give their hearty aſſent to the leſs extenſive, but more practicable plan approved by the General Deputation. But if the preſent ſituation of affairs does not convince them of the neceſſity of joining us on that ground of Parliamentary Reform; if the People themſelves, in theſe times of diſtreſs and danger, cannot be united in ſome feaſible plan, it will not be ſurpriſing, if the Nobility ſhould decline embarking with them.

I hope you have received from Sir James Norcliffe a number of copies of the account given by the General Deputation of their own proceedings. The publication of it having been delayed ſo long, obliged the Yorkſhire Deputies to make a ſeparate Report to the Committee at York, otherwiſe they certainly would have contented themſelves with delivering the account of the General Deputation.

I am, Sir,
With great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper VIII.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Dr. JOHN JEBB.

BURTON-HALL, *June 5th*, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE incloſed account of Proceedings at the laſt Meeting of the Committee at York will, I think, afford you ſome ſatisfaction, as it proves the Yorkſhire Gentlemen to be firm in the cauſe of Public Reformation, although in the preſent deſpondence of the People it is not eaſy for them to determine what ſteps are next to be taken. That will very much depend upon circumſtances; and among others, chiefly on the appearance of a better and more general ſupport next winter. I own I do not expect any thing can be done, if the plan which has been adopted by ſeveral Counties, and approved by the laſt General Deputation, is not conſidered by the friends to Mr. Cartwright's plan as deſerving their ſupport. It ſeems pretty evident, from what has paſſed in the Nation for ſome time, that the Counties have not by any unneceſſary caution fixed their terms of Reformation too low; on the contrary, they find they have not only to ſtruggle againſt the power of Government, but againſt a large body of perſons who are from intereſt or prejudices of various kinds averſe to a Parliamentary Reform, however they may complain of the Corruption of

Parliament. The only chance there is of ſucceeding in the attempt to Reform that corrupt Aſſembly depends entirely on this circumſtance: if the people can detach the latter claſs above-named from co-operating with Government in ſupport of the preſent abuſes, by their own firmneſs, union, and moderation, and by contenting themſelves with that plan which is the leaſt offenſive to the party whoſe aſſiſtance they want. In this caſe, although the ſtruggle would probably be a hard one, I think there would be good reaſon to expect the iſſue would be in our favour. But if the Gentlemen who wiſh for Annual Parliaments and the right of Univerſal Suffrage, will not join the Counties, but will continue to repreſent their plan as not worth a ſtruggle, you may depend upon it the conſequence will be not that the Counties will adopt the more extenſive plan, but that, finding themſelves oppoſed by Government and the Nobility, and not ſupported by the more eager part of the popular body, they will grow tired of the conteſt ſo evidently unavailing, and diſſolve their Committees; or if they keep together, it will be in ſuch a ſtate of inefficiency as the Ariſtocratical Party would gladly ſee them reduced to, namely, to ſerve the mere purpoſe of a County or a City Election.

I wiſh my ſentiments may be fortunate enough to have your approbation; but I am ſo clearly convinced that nothing can be done for the public good if the body of the people cannot be united, that I will venture once more

more to repreſent the neceſſity there is for every caution, for every prudential effort to prevent or to heal the popular diſſentions. Things cannot long remain in the preſent ſituation; the extinction of the Committees muſt take place, unleſs the real friends of Parliamentary Reformation will all unite on the ground already occupied by ſo conſiderable a part of the nation. That ground cannot be changed without a total breaking up of thoſe bodies who have yet the courage to act. Believe me ever,

Dear Sir, with true eſteem,
Your moſt obedient ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

NUMBER

NUMBER XXXIII.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* F. F. FOLJAMBE, Esq.

MRS. PAYNE'S ASS-HOUSE,
KNIGHTSBRIDGE, *Jan.* 4, 1782.

Dear Sir,

YOUR favour of the 23d of December I did not receive till laſt night, having left Burton on account of Mrs. Wyvill's bad ſtate of health, and our deſire to conſult the beſt Phyſicians here, about the time your letter was written. I therefore take the earlieſt opportunity to thank you for it, and to aſſure you how highly I value the marks of eſteem and confidence with which you have honoured me on this, as on ſeveral former occaſions.—With reſpect to the ſubject of your letter, I fear, I can ſay little that may quite accord with your ſentiments, but what I have often ſaid before, that I deteſt the principle of the American War, and expect, whatever the event of it may be, that it will not be terminated without ruin to our Liberties, or to the grandeur of our Country.

The diſcontinuance of it, I therefore think with you, is an event moſt devoutly to be wiſhed,

wiſhed, and if it had not been propoſed by the Petition of London, &c. as the *only object* of Redreſs, but on the contrary, meaſures had been taken by the popular Meetings to bring forward the complaint of fundamental grievances in the ſtate of Parliament, *conjunctly* with a remonſtrance in oppoſition to the American War, in that caſe, I ſhould have wiſhed to ſee Yorkſhire follow the motion of the City of London; and ſhould moſt ſincerely have thought the Nobility, who engaged in ſupport of that *conjunct* plan, deſerved the warmeſt legal efforts of every independent man to aſſiſt them to obtain that power which we ſhould then have reaſon to think would be employed for the preſervation of our ſinking Conſtitution. But I ſhould conſider the adoption of the London Petition by the County of York as a total, though tacit dereliction of the Parliamentary Reform which is the principal object of our Aſſociation, and which would thus be given up, only for the chance of obtaining, by a change of Miniſtry, a Peace with America ſomewhat earlier, and on ſomewhat better terms than we are likely to have it from thoſe who are at preſent in poſſeſſion of power. This would be the beſt that could happen; but if Yorkſhire and the other Counties ſhould follow the Metropolis, and be rejected by the Throne, the preſent diſcouragement of the People would be ſtill increaſed; not to mention the obvious probability, that the attempt in Yorkſhire might

increaſe

increaſe the unfortunate diſſention between the Nobility there and the Aſſociation, or perhaps break up the Aſſociation itſelf.—If in all this I have the misfortune to be of a different opinion from Sir G. Savile, as well as you, I ſhall be much concerned indeed; for no perſon, not even yourſelf, can have a higher veneration for him than I moſt truly have. But I conceive myſelf bound in duty to the Public, to declare my ſentiments without reſerve, though with the moſt unfeigned and heartfelt deference for his far ſuperior experience, and the unſpotted purity of his character.—I have only to add that, in theſe ſentiments I am by no means ſingular, as I have found, in the courſe of a late correſpondence on the ſubject with our excellent friend, Mr. Maſon, as Chairman of the Sub-Committee at York, and alſo with ſeveral other Members of the Committee.

I am, dear Sir,

With great regard,

Moſt truly and ſincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

F. F. Foljambe, Eſq.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. Dr. PRIESTLEY *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Rev. Sir,

I Think myſelf much honoured by your note, and the communication of the *Addreſs*. I am far from making myſelf a judge in political matters, but I cannot help approving the ſpirit and object of it, and hope that by theſe publications men may be prepared to exert themſelves with judgment and effect, whenever the ſtate of things ſhall be favourable to it. At preſent what you call *a pauſe of aſtoniſhment*, is in this part of the country, a pauſe of *indifference*. But the time muſt certainly come when the ſubject will *force* attention.

Though I cannot promiſe you much ſucceſs at preſent, I think it right to have ſuch pieces as this Addreſs in the way of thoſe who ought to read them; and therefore ſhall be obliged to you for a few copies of it.*

With much eſteem, I am,
Rev. Sir,
Your very humble ſervant,
J. PRIESTLEY.

BIRMINGHAM, *Feb.* 14, 1782.

Paper III.

* This letter was the only one which the Editor ever had the honour to receive from this virtuous and eminently uſeful Philoſopher, who was then enjoying in peace his well-deſerved reputation, but who after this period became the object of hatred and animoſity to a powerful party in this country, by whoſe ſavage outrages

Paper III.

Letter *from* SAMUEL VAUGHAN, Esq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

WANSTEAD, ESSEX, *23d April*, 1782.

Sir,

I HAVE very much regretted the not being at home when you did me the honour of calling in Mincing-Lane. It was my full intention

outrages he was compelled to quit it. The Editor knows not whether he may yet be permitted to speak what he thinks of him and the perſecution he ſuſtained, without exciting, in ſome degree, the ſame barbarous intolerance againſt himſelf. To ſatisfy his feelings he will hazard it.

Dr. Prieſtley was a friend to Rational Liberty, and a Devoted Follower of Truth, whoſoever ſhe might lead him; qualities which in better times would have ſecured to him, without his other claims as a Philoſopher, the general reſpect of his Fellow-Citizens. But in Theology and Politics he was too boldly a ſpeculator for the temper of this age. His Theology offended and alarmed the Clergy; his Politics irritated the Miniſtry and their Adherents. From the fury of his Enemies he narrowly eſcaped from Birmingham, with almoſt nothing but his life. The tardineſs of an unwilling Adminiſtration delayed the reparation of his loſſes; and with a moſt culpable parſimony, his juſt demands were diſallowed, or inadequately compenſated. Driven from his home at Birmingham, and purſued with equal rage in London, he could not truſt the Laws of his Country for the protection of his perſon and the relicks of his property. He was forced to ſeek ſafety by exile in America. There he found friendſhip and protection; and his magnanimity under his ſevere misfortunes commanded general eſteem in that Country.

May the temper of this Nation be improved, under a milder and more equitable Adminiſtration than that of Mr. Pitt, and one more liberal and philoſophic than that of Mr. Addington. May it be one of the fruits of ſo happy a change that the certainty of perſonal ſafety and protection, by the juſtice and liberality of Government, may encourage this reſpectable Exile to return from his unmerited baniſhment; and may he end his days in peace and honour in his native country, among Engliſhmen at laſt aſhamed of the cruel intolerance of which he was ſuffered ſo nearly to become the victim.

tention

tention (though unavoidably prevented) to have ſhortly returned your viſit, and to have acknowledged my reſpect and regard on account of the very active part you have taken in behalf of the Conſtitution and Rights of the People. At the ſame time, I am free to confeſs my ſurpriſe at the latter clauſe of the the third reſolution, paſſed by the Yorkſhire Committee on the 4th inſt. which expreſsly leaves to the next Seſſions all application for a more Equal Repreſentation. This delay appearing to me fatal in its conſequences, ſuffer me, Sir, to aſſign ſome reaſons for purſuing the application *immediately*, in which the Committees ſhould *all* vigorouſly unite; and I have the pleaſure to adviſe this to be the opinion of leading men in the Middleſex, Weſtminſter, and London Committees.

It is impoſſible to conceive of any time when Miniſters have been more pledged to us, or have had that pledge to do juſtice to us ſtronger or freſher in their own minds, or in thoſe of the People, than at preſent; nor can their power ever be ſuppoſed ſtronger over the Court, or their union more unbroken among themſelves; and never have the People been more awake and more ready to prompt Miniſters in their duty. Patriotiſm is ſeldom known to improve by Office; in this reign it has uſually decayed; and the faireſt hope we can entertain of Miniſters is, that they ſhall moderate, and be made Mediators between King and People. If luckily, however, they perſiſt in the *whole* of their good intentions,

they

they will nevertheleſs gladly ſee the national ſpirit even riſe for Reformation; that, ſtanding on this baſis, they may offer the more potent and certain motives for influencing a reluctant Court. Beſides, as they are now giving us baubles and toys, which, without ſpirit exerted, may gull and quiet the Public, the Public in conſequence may be further off from their Fundamental Reforms, than if nothing had been granted them. How long this Miniſtry may continue in office, no one knows; which is another reaſon for not waiting, leſt we loſe the influence of office in our favour. But, to chooſe what I am afraid is truer ground: if we keep up the ſtruggle now, Miniſtry may think we are not to be trifled with; but when delay ſhews to them and to the Court that we may be ſafely put off, they may delay for ever; and in the mean-time, thoſe who are moſt our friends in Miniſtry, by delay will be put out of countenance in their requeſts in our favour. And I own it ſeems a new idea of the people to expect gratuitous conceſſions from their rulers; all great reformations in favour of Liberty and of popular Rights having been extorted, not granted. Not to mention that when any point is to be obtained, wiſe Negotiators know that it is always prudent to make the demand at leaſt as high as the conceſſion expected, to produce the exact conceſſion that is attainable. There is a ſtrong argument or two alſo occurring, founded on the juncture of our affairs. To conduct the Government with

vigour,

vigour, thoſe who conduct it muſt have confidence; confidence muſt be got by compliance with wiſhes; and thoſe wiſhes muſt be loudly, generally, and without ceaſing expreſſed, to prevent their being miſtaken or overlooked. While our affairs remain diſtreſſed, the neceſſity of this confidence will be more and more ſeen; but the events of War or of Peace not being to be foreſeen, a ſmall alteration in our affairs abroad may ſuperſede the neceſſity of looking for confidence from any other ſource at home. Beſides, at preſent the *old* Miniſters and Courtiers will be more diſpoſed to ſtand neuter, than hereafter; danger ſtill threatens them while the Empire lies in ruins; they are now ſtunned with their fall, and their beſt hope from their Prince and Country at preſent is from letting things take their courſe; but at a proper moment they may re-appear to quaſh all our efforts and hopes.

To ſay the truth, however, I dread a returning Court influence at this moment, which may loſe us both the Contractors Bill and the Cricklade Bill; which fear, if confirmed by events, will ſhew popular exertions more neceſſary than ever to ſecond new Miniſters, and quell all oppoſition to their honourable endeavours. In ſhort, I cannot but renew the argument, that if Miniſters are honeſt, they will be glad of popular countenance; and if otherwiſe than honeſt, they muſt be kept in fear of popular complaints; and it is a new idea for any people to ſtand upon their

arms, and desert themselves, in order to see what their superiors will do for them.

A better argument, I apprehend, cannot be drawn, than from the case of the Irish, who, instead of being complimentary or delicate, have watched the moment of our weakness, to obtain from us what are indeed the rights of *Men*, but what modern times have not been used to consider as *Irish* rights. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive a more inviting crisis than the present; when our finances and trade, our navy and army, are so low, and want so much restoration; when foreign affairs are so gloomy, and the empire so divided. Let us therefore be wise in time, and not let slip a set of circumstances which, I conceive, can never combine again in our favour; and as we are to be the victims of the distress, and the instruments of the recovery, we ought to be paid for it in the repossession of our rights.

I cannot but conceive that a more equal Representation of the People, and a more limited Duration of our Parliaments, and especially the first of those, are the true sources of our future happiness and greatness. We may make as many separate objects of demand as we please; but these objects obtained, they will of themselves obtain for us all the rest; and without being obtained, all the rest will be mere transitory concessions, and mere acts of an Administration which other Administrations may defeat or recall. Smaller concessions will give back to us twenty

or

or forty Members; but a genuine, or rather a wiſe Repreſentation, would give fair play to the People, and reform the whole.

It is therefore no inſult, or want of confidence in the new Adminiſtration, for the People now to proceed. If they have ſucceſs, theſe Miniſters will have room for their virtue to operate widely and reſolutely, and their term of power will be made perpetual, and out of reach of the Court. A ſenſible Repreſentation will at all times ſecond and even create a virtuous Miniſtry, which otherwiſe muſt depend only on the accident of the Prince's temper, or what is ſtill more calamitous, on the Nation's crying ſufferings.—And as to interrupting the national buſineſs in Parliament, as the diſcuſſion would be referred to a Committee, and as people out of doors would aſſiſt, and as many lights are already thrown out on the ſubject, this Seſſions might compriſe the whole; in every other Seſſions I deſpair, particularly unleſs we make a beginning now.

* I have given theſe my ſentiments at length, and you will do me the favour to weigh them, and to believe me, with much reſpect, Sir,

Your moſt obedient
and moſt humble ſervant,
SAM. VAUGHAN.

* This judicious Letter was much approved by the Yorkſhire Gentlemen, to whom it was communicated. But no movement took place in conſequence of Mr. Vaughan's exhortation, or poſſibly could take place with that promptitude and ſucceſs which he ſeems

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL VAUGHAN, Esq.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, *April 27th*, 1782.

Sir,

I HAVE received your favour of the 22d of April, and I beg leave to return you my beſt acknowledgments, and alſo to congratulate you on that change of Miniſters, which the joint efforts of independent men in every part of the kingdom have at length accompliſhed. Fortunately the powers of Government have been lodged with perſons who have pledged themſelves to the Public to reduce the undue influence of the Crown; the firſt acts of whoſe adminiſtration prove their ſcrupulous

ſeems to have imagined. The Committee of Yorkſhire had met on the 4th of April, 1782, and had adjourned to the 31ſt of October, 1782; ſubject indeed to an earlier call by Requiſition to the Chairman, &c. But neither the County nor even the Committee could have been aſſembled at an earlier period, on the ſuggeſtions of this Letter, judicious as they were, for reaſons ariſing from the great extent of the County and other local conſiderations mentioned in the Anſwer to Mr. Vaughan. There were ſome other circumſtances alſo, then leſs proper to be explicitly ſtated in a Letter intended for the inſpection of a Public Body of Men, which rendered it expedient not to preſs for a Reform in the Repreſentation immediately on the expulſion of Lord North from the Cabinet. Union reſpecting their plan had not been ſufficiently eſtabliſhed among the Reformers, and the New Cabinet was not agreed to give their ſupport to any plan whatever. And yet there were reaſonable grounds for hoping, that by the Counties adopting a more enlarged ſcheme of Reformation, a proper degree of union with the Metropolis might be obtained; that the abolition of the moſt exceptionable Boroughs might be combined with the augmentation of Members to the Counties and the Capital, which was the original principle of the Aſſociations; and thus the Reformers, no longer weakened by their diſunion,

and

ſcrupulous fidelity to that engagement. By this revolution, the weight of office, which has been taken from the adverſe ſcale, is placed in that of the People. Much certainly will be done by the voluntary meaſures of men in power to promote public frugality; and more may be expected from them, when farther regulations for reſtoring the purity of Parliament ſhall be propoſed by the general voice of the Nation.

This is an advantage to the Public Cauſe, which well may animate the moſt indolent and timid of its friends. This is a juncture favourable beyond our expectations, to ſecure the Liberty of our Country, by an effectual Reformation; and they who neglect to im-

and the purſuit of different plans, might apply to Parliament in the ſucceeding Seſſion, with a much improved proſpect of ſucceſs. It was hoped too, that the deference of the People to the New Adminiſtration might give them influence with thoſe Miniſters who were not indeed hoſtile to the popular demand of Reform, but yet not diſpoſed to adopt it as a meaſure of Government. And thus the Duke of Richmond, then friendly to the Claim of the People, and Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden, Lord Aſhburton, and Mr. Fox, who moſt honourably remained ſo, would acquire additional means to incline their Colleagues in the Cabinet to adopt their ſentiments.—This delay was much the wiſh of Sir George Savile, whoſe influence with Lord Rockingham, the principal Miniſter, was very great; and the Yorkſhire Gentlemen looked with unbounded confidence and veneration to their Patriot Repreſentative as the man moſt likely to conciliate him, and even to induce Parliament itſelf, by the weight of his character, to conſent to the meaſure. He was the key-ſtone, to uſe language nearly his own, by which the Nobles and the People, as parts of the ſame political arch, were united and kept together. The deference ſhown to his opinion and inclination, upon this occaſion, was moſt grateful to him: in many ways it added ſtrength to the cauſe of the Reformers; and the continuance of the War, with its concomitant diſtreſſes, prevented that diminution of their zeal which Mr. Vaughan had apprehended.

prove it, can little know the importance of the opportunity, or little regard the preſervation of our Free Conſtitution.

Under either one or the other of theſe predicaments, I ſhould be ſorry the Yorkſhire Gentlemen ſhould deſerve to be claſſed. But although they have poſtponed for a few months their intended application to Parliament, yet, when the reaſons of that delay are explained, I truſt they will be ſatisfactory to the Committee of London.

The County of York is a diſtrict equal in extent to three Counties of the middle ſize. For this reaſon, the Freeholders are not uſually aſſembled without previous notice for a fortnight or three weeks; and a Petition could not well be circulated throughout the County in leſs time than ſeven or eight weeks more. If the Committee of Yorkſhire therefore, on the 4th of April, had reſolved to recommend to their Conſtituents a Petition *in this Seſſion* againſt the grievance of Unequal Repreſentation, it would have been impoſſible to preſent it to Parliament till near the end of June. And although in the Metropolis, and ſome of the neighbouring Counties, the ſenſe of the Electors might have been taken, and their concurrence in a ſimilar application poſſibly might have been obtained before that time, yet the aſſiſtance of many diſtant Counties, &c. muſt have been loſt, and the great Queſtion muſt have been introduced under a double diſadvantage; *at the cloſe of a Seſſion, and without the poſſibility of a general concurrence of*

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the Nation.—On the other hand, it was conſidered, that if the intended application was deferred to the beginning of the next Seſſion, the new Miniſters would be better able to diſembarraſs the perplexed affairs of the Kingdom, and to complete their own ſtipulated Plans of Oeconomical Reformation. And thus the advocates for a melioration of Parliament would at once teſtify a juſt deference to a virtuous Adminiſtration, avoid the imputation of precipitance and other diſadvantages which would attend their propoſition in the preſent Seſſion, and alſo gain time for conſultation, by what means that unanimity may beſt be preſerved, or attained, which alone can ſecure ſucceſs to the popular application.

By theſe conſiderations the Committee of Yorkſhire were induced to delay their intended propoſal of a Second County Petition; and when this explanation of their reaſons has been conſidered, I am inclined to hope their conduct will not be thought, by their friends in the Metropolis, to have been injudicious, or detrimental to the Public Cauſe.

The other ſubject glanced at in your Letter, viz. on what principle the intended Petition may be grounded with moſt advantage, is a queſtion on which I am unwilling to hazard a haſty opinion. I feel myſelf bound to give you a full and explicit anſwer, and you will receive it ſoon; but as it is a ſubject of great importance, and my ſentiments upon it are materially different from thoſe to

which you ſeem to be inclined, I wiſh to conſider it with greater care and attention than I have yet had leiſure to beſtow upon it.

I cannot cloſe this Letter, without expreſſing the ſatisfaction I feel at the approbation with which your moſt reſpectable Committee has honoured the Yorkſhire Gentlemen, many of whoſe Reſolutions, at their Meeting on the 4th of April, you have been pleaſed to adopt. Be aſſured, Sir, they will moſt gladly embrace any proper opportunity, by a ſimilar concurrence on their part, to mark their ſincere reſpect for the Committee of the City of London.*

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your moſt obedient ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Samuel Vaughan, Eſq. *Paper* V.

* Soon after this correſpondence with Mr. Vaughan, a conference at his houſe was propoſed between ſeveral of the principal Members of the Committees of London, Weſtminſter, and Middleſex, and the Chairman of the Yorkſhire Committee. Mr. Granville Sharp, Alderman Townſend, Dr Price, Dr. Jebb, Mr. H. Tooke, and Mr. Vaughan himſelf were preſent, and ſome other Gentlemen whoſe names are not now recollected. It was propoſed by them, as the ground of union between the Counties and the Metropolis, that the Chairman of the Yorkſhire Committee ſhould recommend to that body, to adopt the principle of an adequate abolition of the obnoxious Boroughs; ſo that if the addition of Members propoſed by the Aſſociations ſhould be obtained, a ſuitable diminution of the nominal Repreſentation alſo might be effected, and the number of the Houſe of Commons might not be increaſed. To this principle he had never been averſe; on the contrary, he much approved it; though in his earlieſt propoſal to the Country Gentlemen of Yorkſhire he had not ventured to ſuggeſt ſo extenſive a change; feeling in that ſtage of the buſineſs, that it would be neceſſary to the Reformers to ſhelter themſelves under the authority of Lord Chatham; by whom the idea of an increaſe

Paper V.

Note *from* MATTHEW ROBINSON, Eſq; *afterwards* Lord ROKEBY, *to the* Reverend C. WYVILL, *with an* Addreſs by him *to the* Freeholders *of the* County *of* Kent.

NOTE.

THE Writer of the incloſed Paper has not the honor of being perſonally known to Mr. Wyvill; but he takes, nevertheleſs, the liberty of ſending it to him, with a deſire that he will conſider the means mentioned in it for rendering more equal our Parliamentary Repreſentation.

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increaſe of the County Repreſentation was firſt thrown out to the conſideration of the Public. But with all due deference to that Great Man, it may now be confeſſed that the increaſe of a Member to each County, ſuggeſted by his Lordſhip, and the much greater increaſe propoſed by the Aſſociations, without an adequate extinction of the decayed Boroughs, would have been a very imperfect meaſure; by which, though ſome aid to the independence of Parliament undoubtedly would have been procured, yet no radical or laſting cure for the evils complained of would have been effected. In compliance with the wiſh of ſo many reſpectable Gentlemen of the different Committees, the Editor undertook to propoſe to the Committee of Yorkſhire to ſuperadd to the principle of augmentation that of the adequate abolition of the inferior Boroughs, which at their next Meeting on the 31ſt of October, 1782, was adopted by the Committee. And the plan then adopted in Yorkſhire was afterwards taken by Mr. Pitt, as the ground of his Bill for a Reform in the Repreſentation.

To the FREEHOLDERS *of the* COUNTY *of* KENT.

GENTLEMEN and NEIGHBOURS,

I WAS for one abſent from the Meeting of our County lately held at Maidſtone, and know little of what happened there, except as it has appeared in the news papers. I have, however, read the letters of Sir H. Mann, addreſſed to the Freeholders, concerning the Petition for a more equal Repreſentation of the Commons in Parliament. The firſt of them is the moſt material. It is written in a polite and Gentleman-like manner. The name of Mr. Marſham, our worthy Knight of the Shire, is mentioned in it, as of a perſon partly agreeing in the ſame ſentiments. The letter itſelf has been ſeveral times repeated in our Kentiſh papers; by which it appears evidently intended to make an impreſſion on our County concerning the ſubject of it. I much reſpect Sir H. Mann, and heartily concur in the honour borne to Mr. Marſham by the reſt of his Conſtituents; but I differ widely nevertheleſs from theſe Gentlemen on the occaſion now mentioned. The matter in queſtion is likewiſe of the utmoſt importance to our whole Country and to every perſon in it. I think it, therefore, not only for my intereſt as an individual, but a kind of duty incumbent upon me, to explain publicly my opinion, and to aſſign

aſſign ſome of the reaſons why what has been alleged does not convince me in the caſe.

Sir H. M. ſays, "I oppoſed it (the Petition for a more equal Repreſentation) from the danger I apprehended from innovations in the Conſtitution." This is the principal objection produced, and I acknowledge it to be a ſubſtantial one, if it will apply to the preſent purpoſe. I may venture to aſſure any one, that I will be on the ſame ſide, if I ſhall ſee the matter in the ſame light. I conceive on the contrary, however, that a more general and equal Repreſentation of the Commons in Parliament is ſo far from an innovation, as to be the very eſſence itſelf of our Conſtitution; a circumſtance without which this cannot poſſibly, and for want whereof it does now actually not, ſubſiſt: I join iſſue therefore on that very ground.

I underſtand our right and lawful Government to be unqueſtionably compoſed of an hereditary King, hereditary Peers, and an elective body repreſenting the Commons; that this laſt power or part of the Legiſlature is as indiſpenſably neceſſary in the caſe as either of the other two, and that our Conſtitution can no more ſubſiſt without ſuch a Repreſentation, than without the Crown or the Peerage. I mean hereby a true and real Repreſentation of the Commons; for that word has otherwiſe no conception annexed to it, but is only a mere name, a ſound, or a few literary marks without ſenſe or meaning.

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The King is of courſe a ſingle perſon: the Peers are between two and three hundred: but the Commons conſiſt of many millions, for whoſe ſake, and with whoſe conſent, this form of Government was inſtituted; not that a few men might rule and lord it over all the reſt, but becauſe our anceſtors thought, that ſuch a mixed conſtitution would moſt contribute to the comfort and happineſs of the whole. Whoever denies theſe principles, makes Government itſelf no better than an uſurpation; which individuals are not otherwiſe obliged to obey, than as it may happen to ſuit with their intereſt, pleaſure, or convenience.

The King and Peers act perſonally as they can conveniently do; but the Commons, compoſing in a manner the whole Nation, and being exceedingly too numerous and too diſperſed to partake immediately or collectively in the general conduct of the State, are under a neceſſity of having a recourſe to election. They do, or ought to chuſe therefore deputies, ſubſtitutes, attornies, ſtewards, agents, or more properly Repreſentatives, (as they are indeed ſtiled) that is, perſons who may expreſs their ſentiments and conſult their intereſt almoſt as naturally and neceſſarily as a mirror reflects the image of its object; I ſay a number of men who may to all true intents and purpoſes, be the Commons in Parliament aſſembled.

This Body ought both to be elected and act with perfect liberty, equally free from force

force and violence on one hand, and from bribery and corruption on the other. It matters not with regard to right and wrong, whether any man be diverted from his duty by a bayonet immediately held to his breaſt, or by a more diſtant and indirect temptation of money, by the ſword or the purſe, by iron or by gold; although bribery and corruption may perhaps be the more baſe, more odious, and in ſome reſpects more malignant means of the two. I take this to be a ſhort ſketch of the ground on which ſtand both our Conſtitution in general and the elective branch of it in particular.

How utterly are nevertheleſs theſe things overturned or altered? Do the Commons of Great Britain really elect ſuch a repreſentative body, or is the majority of what ought to be their Houſe named by an handful of men in compariſon of the whole, an handful of men notoriouſly known to be influenced, corrupted, bribed, bought and ſold? Caſt your eyes on our own County. The Cinque-Ports were anciently inſtituted with a ſalutary and honourable deſign of the public defence; but to what very different purpoſes are they now perverted? How eaſily might any one point out particulars on this head, name the very perſons, together with the places, ſalaries, emoluments or advantages perpetually enjoyed by them for their ſeptennial votes; I mean any one, who was not unwilling to diſturb and diſquiet his neighbours in the poſſeſſion of their profits, unleſs he could really remove the evil? Does

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not one of them however consist of only twenty-four freemen or electors, so that thirteen persons, being a majority of that number, can appoint two Members of Parliament? Are there not Corporations called in common language and discourse Admiralty or Ordnance-boroughs? Have we no such among us, or what is the import of those expressions? I have touched these things with a tender hand: they are however enormous instances at our own homes; but look to the westward of our Island and you may see the Country spangled with such places, almost as the firmament is with stars. It is said, that there are in the kingdom Seventy Boroughs subject to be biassed, and the elections of an hundred and thirty Members of Parliament liable to be influenced by the Board of Treasury. Do not some individuals by the means of Burgage-tenure nominate two (must I call them) Representatives of the people with as much certainty and facility as they appoint the same number of their own menial footmen? Who can without being shocked reflect for an instant on these things, that retains any regard for the freedom, welfare, or honour of our country. But to what an extravagant and (if the subject was not so extremely serious) ridiculous degree must such enormities have arisen, when an Indian Prince interferes with the most bare-faced bribery in English elections? Is this likewise a part or circumstance of our excellent constitution, that the Nabob of Arcot should by the means of his Agent and

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his Money name ſeven or eight Members of the Britiſh Parliament? Does then the aboliſhing of ſuch horrible abuſes, and reinſtating the Commons of England in the due ſhare of their own legiſlature, deſerve to be conſidered as making innovations, or is it on the contrary not really reſtoring and re-eſtabliſhing the true form of government formerly introduced by our anceſtors, but now totally loſt from among us?

Should any one ſay (not the worthy Gentleman whoſe letter has given occaſion to this of mine, and in which I obſerve no ſuch particular) any one elſe however ſay, that he means by the Conſtitution no ancient and retroſpective right or appointment, but the actual ſtate of things now obtaining; I would then aſk him, how his argument hangs together, his premiſes ſuit with the deductions which he would draw from them. If that word is to ſignify the preſent corruption and proſtitution, miniſterial influence, unequal elections, ſeptennial Parliaments, and all the enormities and abuſes of theſe times, for what reaſon does it deſerve to be honored, extolled, or preſerved, and why ſhould we not embrace the firſt opportunity to alter or get rid of it? We are told of barbarous or ignorant people worſhipping a miſchievous and malevolent principle of the univerſe, which is imputed to them as the higheſt of crimes. I muſt confeſs myſelf not readily to credit ſuch ſtories, eſpecially as they are ſometimes repreſented; but how far diſtant from ſuch a conduct

duct would in effect our own be, if we were to reſpect and reverence a form of government founded in evil, and productive of miſchief inſtead of comfort and happineſs to mankind? How like at the bottom is nevertheleſs ſuch a caſe to the argument of ſome men, when they endeavour to put the change upon us by perverting that almoſt ſacred word of the Conſtitution; who, I ſay, hold it up to us for our worſhip at the ſame time that they mean by it themſelves almoſt every thing bad, pernicious, and deteſtable?

Sir H. M. however admoniſhes us, that things ſometimes appear fair in ſpeculation which fail in practice; but what is our preſent condition, that we need to fear its being changed for the worſe by any ſuch meaſure as is on this occaſion recommended? Have not our unequal elections produced a Government totally carried on, ſubſiſting and acting by corruption in a manner and a degree not only ruinous to our nation, but even diſgraceful to humanity itſelf? Force and violence of various ſorts, arbitrary power, down-right tyranny and oppreſſion always have been and now are moſt common among men; but never did the artifice and influence of abſolute bribery, a ſettled ſyſtem of places, penſions, and other pecuniary profits, ſo obtain in any part of the world as they have lately done in our State, nor was it poſſible that they ſhould, unleſs ſome other country had incurred a like national debt, and its Miniſters could by that means have employed as large ſums for the

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ſame purpoſe, which circumſtances however did never yet take place. I humbly conceive our Engliſh Adminiſtrations to have on this head exceeded all paſt examples; and it is for the benefit of our ſpecies much to be wiſhed, that they may be equalled by no inſtances in the time to come. The conſequences correſpond with their cauſe; to wit, a rich nation on the brink of bankruptcy, a mighty empire ſuddenly ſhattered to pieces, and in the moſt imminent danger of being totally deſtroyed or diſſolved; while the Public, ſenſible of the evils brought upon them, are obliged to look on helpleſs ſpectators of their own undoing. Is this then the Engliſh Conſtitution, or a national ſituation, which requires no remedy, and excludes all endeavours towards amendment? Surely it is high time that honeſt men, of every denomination, ſhould unite together to provide for the general liberty and ſafety, nor ſuffer themſelves to be deterred, by groundleſs apprehenſions, when they have ſo many real dangers and difficulties of the very worſt kind to encounter.

As to the principle and object being on this occaſion in their own nature proper, but the ſeaſon and time unſuitable, I muſt confeſs myſelf totally to differ from that idea. What has brought us to our preſent condition, but the loſs of our Conſtitution? Had the leaſt check or controul remained with the Public in the management of their own buſineſs, or over thoſe conducting it, we could not poſſibly have been reduced to the deplorable paſs

in which we at this inſtant find ourſelves. What muſt be the due means now to extricate, or (if that cannot be) hereafter to reſtore us, except a recovery of the ſame Conſtitution, which perpetually preſerved us, while it continued itſelf in any ſtate of purity or perfection? We are come to the very brink of the precipice, and cannot proceed one ſtep further in the ſame road without going headlong: we are ſo ſurrounded on all ſides with danger, that we have hardly a day to delay: it may already be too late; but we have beyond doubt no time to ſpare. That our Miniſters are with, or not againſt us, is an happy and deſirable, but not a perpetual or unalterable circumſtance. Men may change or be changed. How tender a flower is Court favour! it flouriſhes to-day, but withers to-morrow. And have we in our own times not too often ſeen even public virtue to fade in that infectious climate? I truſt, however, that this laſt circumſtance will not now be the caſe; but does any one believe corruption to be either converted or overcome, or that it is not on the watch to regain its late aſcendency? Has it never, or no where ſince its fall, ſhewn a cloven foot, or put forth and diſplayed its ſtrength? To re-eſtabliſh the conſtitutional power of the Public is certainly the beſt, and perhaps the only means of ſecuring either our preſent or any other upright and honeſt Miniſters. The time preſſes, opportunity aſſiſts us, and we do not even de-

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ſerve to be ſaved, if we are wanting to ourſelves at ſo critical a conjuncture.

I can as little give in to the objection of ſuch an endeavour creating diviſions and animoſities; for the meaſure itſelf ſeems to be the only poſſible means of putting an end to thoſe of the moſt dangerous and malignant kind, which now obtain among us. There can in the nature of things be no true and ſteady union between our Government and our Nation, until the Commons and their Repreſentatives ſhall in effect be really one, until this moſt precious and eſſential part of our Conſtitution is again reſtored. I will only put one caſe, which is but too probable to happen. Suppoſe that there ſhould be a Public Bankruptcy, what ſet of Miniſters could guide or regulate the State in the diſtraction and confuſion of ſuch a circumſtance, unleſs they have the aſſiſtance of a Parliament truly choſen by the People and the Nation, ſpeaking their ſenſe, and poſſeſſing their fulleſt confidence; by whoſe means theſe may remain, although not contented and ſatisfied, yet peaceable and obedient under the misfortunes of the times? If there is any particular perſon of the Adminiſtration who has contracted ſome unaccountable prejudice againſt the People, whatever his merits may otherwiſe be, it is to be hoped that he will on this neceſſary occaſion give way, or be over-ruled by the reſt; for what general agreement or harmony can be expected among us, while that National Body, the Commons, are thus deprived of

their moſt material right, ſee their eſſential truſt withheld from them, and their greateſt concerns conducted by men to whom they never gave authority, and with whom they have little or no weight?

There is one particular point reſpecting the matter before us, concerning which I cannot but wiſh that the ſentiments were known of the Gentlemen whoſe names have been now mentioned, I mean if they are not averſe to explaining themſelves on the ſubject, which however I do not conceive theſe candid and liberal perſons to be. When a late motion was made to inquire into the ſtate of our Repreſentation, the Writer concurred for one, with the reſt of the Nation in general, and earneſtly deſired that it might ſucceed, altho' he was at the ſame time doubtful of the event, from ſome difficulties which lay in the way. Seats in the Houſe of Commons are obſerved to attach and to attract in a ſtrong manner moſt perſons who once come into contact with them. They naturally contribute to the credit of the Poſſeſſors, which is certainly very proper; but they are often likewiſe made ſubſervient to their profits, which is, without doubt, exceedingly improper: there are, however, few perſons not ſenſible to one or the other of theſe objects. Such a motion, therefore, could not but alarm many Members of the Houſe for their own ſeats. The abuſe likewiſe itſelf, of our unequal elections and mock Repreſentation, has proceeded to an extreme and ſhameful degree. This is now

pretty well known by parts and piece-meal; but the whole collected and expoſed together, would undoubtedly make a moſt ſtriking appearance in the eyes of the Public. It is a ſore which could not but greatly rankle on being touched and handled. Theſe are in truth unanſwerable reaſons for the rectitude, but at the ſame time very powerful obſtacles, in fact, to the ſucceſs of ſuch a meaſure. It is nevertheleſs to be hoped, that the firmneſs and perſeverance of the Public will, with ſo juſt a cauſe, prevail in time, in whatever manner it ſhall be thought moſt proper to purſue this object.

Is there not, however, one very great and material point free from the foregoing difculties, which might, without much impediment, be probably obtained, (if it was attempted) and which would at the ſame time prevent or interfere with no other; I mean, the meaſure of doubling the Members elected by our Counties? This would endanger the ſeat of no one within the Houſe, nor leſſen the ſhare of any in chuſing without. Several of the preſent Members would, on the contrary, be of courſe advanced from Cities or Boroughs to Counties, and the reſt have, by that means, as it were, more elbow room, and fewer competitors in their reſpective places. It muſt, on one hand, exceedingly ſtrengthen the Commons by the addition of about an hundred to their Houſe; while it could on the other raiſe no jealouſy in the Peers, as many of their own neareſt relations would, in all appear-

ance, be of the number, and the reſt conſiſt of perſons moſt approaching to themſelves in property and pretenſions. It would, at the ſame time, contribute to the ſecurity of the Crown, as Country Gentlemen of the beſt landed eſtates would neceſſarily be the objects of ſuch an additional choice for our Counties; a ſet of men who are eſpecially intereſted in the ſtability of their Country, and the Preſervation of our Conſtitution. It is, moreover, the particular point recommended by Yorkſhire and other Counties. The general ſtate of our Repreſentation, likewiſe, is ſo well underſtood with reſpect to it, that it ſeems to require no ceremony of a preceding Committee for its introduction. There are, therefore, extraordinary facilities and advantages on the ſide of this meaſure. Such a circumſtance would indeed increaſe the number of the Houſe of Commons; but full Houſes are ever deſired, and there is room enough in Weſtminſter-Hall, until another chamber could be provided. A place was, at the trial of Lord Lovat, prepared there, which contained both Houſes of Parliament, and a conſiderable concourſe of company beſides. That particular, therefore, ſeems to be far from an objection. Some people, indeed, pretend to applaud this propoſition itſelf, but to make a point of aboliſhing, at the ſame time, a proportionable number of ſmall Boroughs. Such a proceeding, however, bears the plaineſt marks of inſincerity; for it would be faſtening a mill-ſtone to the meaſure, which muſt infallibly and evidently prevent it from paſſing.

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Give me leave to add on this head, that we have ourſelves ſent to Parliament two worthy Repreſentatives of our Province; it is nevertheleſs to be hoped, that the County of Kent is not weakened or worn out, but that we can find and furniſh two more perſons perfectly fit and qualified for the ſame truſt and office; nor have we the leaſt reaſon to judge or conclude in a different manner concerning other Counties. This is then the particular propoſition, concerning which I muſt confeſs myſelf to wiſh that we knew the ſentiments of theſe Gentlemen, one of whom repreſents our County itſelf, and the other our County-Town, as it appears to be a meaſure likely to come before Parliament, of the utmoſt importance and apparent benefit to the Public, and free from all material, not only, objections, but even difficulties.

I do not ſay that this point only is adequate to our rights or our wants; but it would nevertheleſs be an exceedingly good and deſirable proviſion. If there ſhould one day be added to it, that every perſon poſſeſſing in any County (not merely for certain reaſons a freehold, but) a fee ſimple of fifty pounds a year ſhall be intitled to vote in all the Boroughs of the ſame County conjointly with the preſent Electors; this would be a plain, eaſy, and practicable meaſure. Who would except to that claſs of men on ſuch an occaſion; unleſs he was immoveably determined in favour of downright deſpotiſm, and could be contented with no plan or ſettlement but

what ſtood on that ground? I will make bold to affirm, that our Conſtitution would in the ſuppoſed caſe be reſtored to excellent order and condition. It is ſaid, that ſkilful ſurgeons endeavour in the healing of wounds to preſerve as much of the former parts as they poſſibly can. Our own conduct in curing this deſperate miſchief of the body politic, now under conſideration, would, by the proceſs before mentioned, be of the like kind; but for thoſe perſons, who, not content with ſuch moderate means and aſſiſtance, deſire to divide the Kingdom into other Diſtricts, or totally to new model our Parliamentary Elections, I may for one earneſtly and ſincerely wiſh them ſucceſs in their endeavours; but I am, nevertheleſs, perfectly perſuaded, that they are purſuing an object placed in theſe times beyond the compaſs of moral poſſibility.

I come towards a concluſion, as is high time. The propoſed Petition (it is ſaid) will be ſent about the County for the convenience of ſigning. It is to be deſired that this may be done without delay, ſo as to allow proper leiſure for the purpoſe. We have two Cathedrals, a Dock, and ſeveral Cinque-Ports, but I much miſtake nevertheleſs the ſenſe of the Country, or it is, and will appear to be, very greatly in favour of a more General Repreſentation of the Public in the Houſe of Commons. Perſons of that opinion ſurely will not ſcruple to take the trouble of ſigning their names in teſtimony of their ſentiments. They will reflect that they are ſetting their ſigna-

tures

tures for the recovery of our rightful Conſtitution, conſiſting of King, Lords, and Commons, of the Commons truly and really repreſented in Parliament, the unhappy ſuſpenſion of which form of Government has already involved us in many and heavy misfortunes, and ſeems likely to ſink us into more and worſe; but the juſt and ſalutary reſtoration whereof only can, under Heaven, preſerve us from, or ſupport us under them.

I have preſumed to treſpaſs upon you with a long letter, much longer than I intended when I began to write. This circumſtance has proceeded from the extreme importance of my ſubject, as likewiſe from the reſpect due to the perſons from whoſe ſentiments I have on the preſent occaſion expreſſed my diſſent; but I truſt the reaſonableneſs of our Petition for a more General and Equal Repreſentation of the Commons in Parliament to be perfectly clear, whether we conſider the inherent right of our claim, the urgent neceſſity of our ſituation, or the peculiar propriety of the time for our purpoſe.

I am, &c.

An Independent Freeholder of Kent.

3d of July, 1782.

P.S. Since the foregoing letter was written, news is received that our Nation has loſt Lord Rockingham. This unwelcome account could not have come at a more unlucky time. At that inſtant vaniſhed the ſhort gleam of light which

which had broken forth from the black cloud hanging over our heads, and flaſhed for a moment on this Iſland. We ſhall now find great reaſon to regret that more was not done in the preſent Seſſion of Parliament for reſtoring our Conſtitution. What misfortunes and miſeries of this country has death probably ſaved that deſerving Nobleman from ſeeing! Deſpair and deſpondency, however, will be far from mending the ſtate of our affairs: the more difficulties we have to encounter, the ſtronger is the neceſſity for us to exert ourſelves. Let us not be wanting in our perſonal endeavours on this critical, and perhaps laſt occaſion: let us at leaſt uſe our own efforts, when the event muſt be left to fate.

Paper VI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* WALTER SPENCER STANHOPE, Eſq; M. P.

BURTON-HALL, *Oct.* 5, 1782.

Dear Sir,

I Received at Hartlepool your favour of the 17th of September; and feeling myſelf much honoured by the frank communication of your ſentiments on the propoſed Meeting of the County, I wiſhed to return you my beſt acknowledgments immediately. But many things which you have ſuggeſted being matters of great conſequence, I could not venture

venture to mention my opinion upon them, which yet your candour and unreſerved openneſs gave you a right to expect, without a more mature conſideration of the ſubject.

At a full Meeting of the Yorkſhire Committee on the 4th of April laſt, it was reſolved to call a Meeting of the County, and to fix a day for that purpoſe on the 31ſt of October; at leaſt this is plainly implied, if not directly affirmed in the Reſolution alluded to. On the ſuppoſition, then, that no Call of the County from any other quarter ſhall anticipate the intention of the Committee, a Meeting of the County can hardly be held with propriety before the 20th of November; and if the next Seſſion of Parliament ſhould open on the 26th of November, it might perhaps be adviſable to wait till the King's Speech could be received. If this ſhould be thought to point at too late a day, let it be remembered the firſt Meeting on the Oeconomical Petition was held with ſucceſs a month later. When the campaign is over, proper attention would be given by the People to queſtions of Reform. Time would be allowed to the Officers of the Militia to attend at York, after the camps are broken up, and yet time ſufficient would be left to obtain a full ſignature, and to carry the Petition into the Houſe early after Chriſtmas, when the ardour of the Public, roufed by the exertions of the Committees in every part of the Kingdom, would be moſt likely to make an impreſſion on Parliament.—Buſineſs of this magnitude cannot be done

done with the coolneſs of ſpeculation; there muſt be *for the Change* an eagerneſs in the People bordering upon enthuſiaſm; and that popular eagerneſs, or enthuſiaſm, muſt be brought to operate on Parliament, and in ſome degree to work up a ſimilar paſſion in that Aſſembly. The Petitions ſhould be applied to the Parliament warm from the County Meetings, at a time when queſtions of that importance may be immediately taken into conſideration, and a Parliamentary deciſion may be ſoon obtained. Nothing is ſo ruinous to popular meaſures as premature exertions; in that caſe, the zeal of the People is tired out by procraſtination, and when their buſineſs is brought forward for the determination of Parliament, their ardour is gone, they have loſt their weight, and can expect their Petition to be treated with little more attention than if it were an abſtract propoſition taken from Locke's Eſſay on Government. I am perſuaded, therefore, that if the County of York ſhall meet any time before the end of November, it will not have acted, upon the whole, diſadvantageouſly for the common cauſe. And as to the *County Point of Honour*, and *preſerving the Lead* in the buſineſs, if ſuch circumſtances can deſerve to be mentioned on this occaſion, I think the Miniſter's meſſage puts that matter out of doubt, if there were any doubt before. But the other Counties, I underſtand, are in general waiting for the motions of Yorkſhire.

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As to the *matters* which it may be proper to agitate at the intended Meeting, beſide the propoſitions of Reform, and thanks for what has been done, I own, *I ſee nothing* which can be ſafely or properly offered to the County. The Reform of Parliament is of the greateſt conſequence to the Public; nothing, therefore, which has even a remote tendency to create diviſions in the Meeting, or to leſſen the probability of ſucceſs to the principal meaſure, ought, in my opinion, to be attempted. To avoid all diſputable queſtions, and to guard againſt every appearance of partiality to Men in Office, or of preference to thoſe who have ſeceded from it, ſeems to be that honeſt policy which will moſt effectually promote the Public Cauſe, and at the ſame time will be conſiſtent with the dignity and independent ſpirit which have hitherto marked the conduct of the Yorkſhire Gentlemen. But although the Committee and other Friends to Reformation, who, like yourſelf, happen not to be of it, may obſerve the moſt guarded conduct, yet there may be perſons who either from injudicious zeal, or from inſidious motives, may bring on the diſcuſſion of ſome of thoſe queſtions which you have mentioned. This is the riſque attending all very numerous aſſemblies; and we muſt prepare to meet it. I own, I ſhould not be apprehenſive of the event, if ſomething like the ideas I have here ventured ſo freely to throw out ſhould be honoured with your approbation, and particularly

larly with that of Sir G. Savile, and ſhould be adopted alſo by the Committee.

I cannot cloſe this long letter without aſſuring you how happy I am in your approbation of my conduct, expreſſed indeed in terms far too flattering to a perſon in my very private ſtation in life. I have felt the grievances of bad Government, and have endeavoured, in common with others, to point the indignation of the People at thoſe abuſes whoſe redreſs alone can ſecure the happineſs of our Country. But if a Reformation of Parliament can be effected, the glory of the deed will be juſtly given to thoſe men who, having the power, ſhall alſo have the virtue to perform it.

That you may have a large ſhare of this honourable reward, is the very ſincere wiſh of, Dear Sir,

Your moſt faithful,
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

I would beg you to make my compliments to Sir G. Savile and Gen. Hale; and mention to them that *a Meſſage*, not *a Letter*, was received from Lord Shelburne.

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

Extract *of a* Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* W. Chaloner, Esq.

Burton-Hall, *Oct.* 5, 1782.

Dear Sir,

IN addition to my former intelligence reſpecting Lord Shelburne, I have the pleaſure to mention that I alſo received a meſſage from Mr. W. Pitt, aſſuring us of his invariable adherence to the principles he has profeſſed, &c. All this looks well, and muſt ſurely be thought to improve our change of ſucceſs conſiderably. I wiſh to draw from theſe favourable circumſtances all poſſible advantage to our cauſe; but I am convinced with you, we have no buſineſs to embark with the preſent Miniſter, nor, I will freely add, with any man whatever who may be attempting to diſplace him; our great object is to ſecure the Conſtitution, by obtaining a Reform of Parliament on the principles of the Aſſociation, and we can hardly preſs for it with too much zeal; but at the ſame time it will be neceſſary to avoid all diſputed queſtions, and to guard againſt every appearance of partiality on either hand. This will be conſiſtent with the dignity and independence of our conduct hitherto, and will be the moſt probable means of ſecuring final ſucceſs to our meaſures; ſuch at leaſt are my ſentiments and my wiſhes, which I have ventured

tured to diſcloſe to you in this very open manner, becauſe I truſt they are ſimilar to thoſe which you entertain and have always acted upon with manly ſteadineſs and uniformity throughout the whole courſe of our buſineſs. It will give me the greateſt pleaſure to hear from my good friend that he approves what I have here ſo freely thrown out.

P. S. I would beg you not to mention what I have ſaid reſpecting Mr. W. Pitt; I do not mean to communicate it any farther.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from the* DEAN *of* ST. ASAPH *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Rev. Sir,

I Take leave to incloſe the Reſolutions of the Flintſhire Committee at their laſt Meeting. Permit me to flatter myſelf that the ſpirit of Reformation, for which we are principally indebted to the exertions of the County of York, will not be permitted to ſleep until the neceſſary improvements of the Conſtitution are effectually obtained.

I have the honour to be

Your moſt obedient

very humble ſervant,

WM. DAVIES SHIPLEY.

HANBERCH PARK,
Oct. 11, 1782.

Paper IX.

Paper IX.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* DEAN *of* ST. ASAPH.

BURTON-HALL, *Oct.* 18, 1782.

Sir,

I Have received your favour of the 11th of this month, with the excellent Reſolutions of the Flintſhire Committee on the 18th of September laſt incloſed.* I thank you, Sir, for the obliging communication; and I am confident that the appearance of your Reſolutions in the Yorkſhire Papers will give much ſatisfaction to the numerous Friends of Public Reformation in this County. I ſhall lay your Letter before the Yorkſhire Committee on the 31ſt of October inſtant, who will undoubtedly feel themſelves much honoured by the very flattering manner in which you expreſs your approbation of their conduct. The buſineſs of the Committee on the 31ſt of October, according to their Reſolution at a former Meeting, will be, to fix a day for holding a General Meeting of this County, in order to take the ſenſe of the Freeholders on the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation; and I think it probable, they will appoint for that purpoſe ſome day near the end of November,

* Of theſe Reſolutions no Copy has been found among the Papers of the Committee.

or the beginning of December. I truſt, that the Petition which will be then offered to the County, will be ſupported with as much zeal and vigour as *that* ſome years ago on the ſubject of Public Oeconomy.

I have the ſatisfaction to mention that I have lately received from Lord Shelburne *a meſſage*, in which his Lordſhip ſtrongly expreſſed his reſolution to ſupport the Aſſociation of this County. Without meaning to lay any extraordinary ſtreſs on this communication from the Miniſter, I think it may be conſidered as an encouraging circumſtance, which, in ſome degree, improves the probability, that the Friends of Reformation will finally ſucceed.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient

humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper X.

Paper X.

Letter *from the* Earl *of* SURREY *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

SHEFFIELD, *Oct. 26th*, 1782.

Sir,

I THINK myſelf much obliged by the honour of your communication of the Earl of Shelburne's meſſage, expreſſing his reſolution to ſupport the Aſſociation of the County of York, and your kind offer of propoſing my name to be added to their body.

The exertions of this County to procure a Reform in Parliamentary Repreſentation (without which it is my firm opinion the glorious fabric of the Britiſh Conſtitution muſt inevitably fall to ruin) and Oeconomy in the Public Expenditure, had ever my warmeſt wiſhes for ſucceſs.

Though I cannot but ſincerely join with every Friend to this Country in lamenting the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, and the Seceſſion of ſome whoſe virtues and abilities in Council would have greatly helped to unite the confidence and affection of King and People, I have ſome pleaſure in relating, that in different interviews with the Earl of Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, it was their fixed ſyſtem of Government to conduct his Majeſty's affairs by ſtrict rules of œconomy, and to give the moſt honourable ſupport to meaſures that

would reſtore the People to their Rights by a Reform in Parliamentary Repreſentation.

With reſpect to myſelf, I beg leave to add, that I did not accept the Lieutenancy of the Weſt-Riding till it had been declined by Earl Fitzwilliam, it being the earneſt wiſh of the Miniſter that he would have ſolicited it as a meaſure that would have been acceptable to this County, from the reſpect they bear the memory of the late Lord Rockingham, and the character of his preſent ſucceſſor.

Permit me alſo to ſuggeſt to the conſideration of the Gentlemen who will meet on the 31ſt of this month, the propriety of calling a Meeting for the end of December, rather than November, to accommodate thoſe whoſe attendance will otherwiſe be prevented by the ſitting of Parliament. *

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful obedient ſervant,

SURREY.

* On a late inſpection of this Letter, it appears to have been intended by the Earl of Surrey, (now Duke of Norfolk), to be communicated to the Yorkſhire Committee. It is therefore a *Public Letter*; and by the rule of Impartiality, it is committed to the preſs, as thoſe have been of the Earl of Shelburne, Earl Fitzwilliam, &c. This, the Editor truſts, will be conſidered, by his Grace, and by the Writers of other Letters, fruitfully circumſtanced, to be a ſufficient juſtification.

Paper XI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Doctor GILBERT STUART, *and to* Profeſſor FERGUSON.

BURTON-HALL, *Nov.* 14, 1782.

Sir,

HAVING been long accuſtomed, from the general ſpirit of your writings, to conſider you as a ſincere and zealous Friend to the Conſtitution of our Country, I take the liberty to tranſmit to you the incloſed Propoſal of the Yorkſhire Committee for a Reformation of Parliament, in reſpect to both its frame and duration; and alſo, for the extenſion and better regulation of the Right of Election to Parliament throughout the kingdom. It would give the Yorkſhire Gentlemen the greateſt ſatisfaction to find their propoſitions are honoured with your approbation, and that of the Committee of Edinburgh, or any other Public Body of Men to whom you may have the goodneſs to communicate them.*

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

With great reſpect,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

* The propoſition of the Yorkſhire Committee, conveyed in this Letter to Dr. Stuart, and Profeſſor Ferguſon, was probably the firſt communication from any public body of men in England which evidenced a diſpoſition to extinguiſh every remaining ſpark

Paper XII.

Letter *from* Dr. GILBERT STUART *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I HAVE not ſufficiently the command of language to expreſs to my wiſh the extreme happineſs with which I received your communications. The Propoſitions of the Gentlemen of Yorkſhire appear to me to be

of thoſe animoſities which the writings of Mr. Wilkes, in oppoſition to Lord Bute, had been too ſucceſsfully employed to excite. National reflections are always illiberal; and when thrown out in the heat of political controverſy, they are at once diſgraceful to the Patriot, and injurious to his cauſe. Inſtead of uniting the whole Body of the People for the defence of Liberty, they diſguſt and divide, and render Union impracticable.

The Yorkſhire Gentlemen felt the impropriety of ſuch conduct, and with a manly frankneſs held forth to their worthy Fellow-Citizens in Scotland the right-hand of conciliation. The pledge was accepted with equal frankneſs and generoſity by private individuals of diſtinguiſhed merit, and public bodies in Scotland. And never may the pledge be withdrawn; never may diſſentions be renewed by freſh illiberalities; but may the talents and integrity of men born on each ſide of the Tweed be ever united, to preſerve the freedom of this United Nation againſt the baſe attempts of Corruption, or the more daring attacks of Force.

From theſe remarks, however, it ought not to be inferred, that the Writer is not very ſenſible of the important ſervice to the Cauſe of Liberty performed by Mr. Wilkes. To his fortitude and perſeverance the Nation owes the correction of that dangerous abuſe, the Arreſt of Perſons on General Warrants. This practice, ſupported by many precedents, and become habitual to the Secretaries of State, was reſiſted by Mr. Wilkes; and the judicial deciſion againſt it, obtained by him, added a ſecurity to perſonal Liberty, which ought to be had in grateful remembrance. But in the courſe of a few years, during the ſame eventful reign, the ſecurity of perſonal Freedom has been again infringed, and every popular Right impaired or deſtroyed by a new ſyſtem, directly tending to ruin the Conſtitution. Deeply criminal is the violence of Adminiſtration, and fatal ſoon muſt be the acquieſcence of the Public!

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proper and ſalutary in the greateſt degree. I admire the ſpirit of their Patriotiſm, and I reſpect the temperate firmneſs of their mode of proceeding. My approbation I beg leave to offer to them with the higheſt cordiality and pleaſure. But I much fear it can have little merit, except for the entire ſincerity with which it is given. The more I conſider the important points about which they are anxious, I am the more convinced of the rectitude and liberality of their conduct, and that they will invariably conſult alike the ancient renown of their Country and its preſent glory. To you, for your private Letter, I am obliged in a very peculiar manner. Your appeal to my writings is very polite and flattering to me; for it is a ſtrong proof that they have a title to be not indifferent to the Friends of Liberty and Mankind. In conſequence of your communications I have written to my Lord Buchan at Edinburgh on the ſubject of them, and I tranſmit you a copy of my application to him.

I have the honour to be,
With the moſt perfect reſpect,
Sir,
Your moſt obedient,
and moſt humble ſervant,
GILB. STUART.

LONDON,
Southampton Buildings,
Holborn, No. 13.
28*th Nov.* 1782.

Paper XIII.

Letter *from* Dr. GILBERT STUART *to the* Earl *of* BUCHAN, *communicated to* Mr. WYVILL *by* Dr. STUART.

My Lord,

THE incloſed Papers, which were ſent to me by the Rev. Mr. C. Wyvill, I am anxious to lay before your Lordſhip. They have my fulleſt and warmeſt approbation; and, if they are agreeable to the opinions entertained by your Lordſhip, I intreat that you will be ſo good as to promote their purpoſes. Indeed, your efforts, in ſuch an important buſineſs, are the more neceſſary, as, I believe, there exiſts in Scotland an inclement faction of men, who are enemies to the Freedom of our Conſtitution, and who would gladly ſeek for the true order of Government in the dead calm of Deſpotiſm.

I have the honour to be,
With the greateſt reſpect,
My Lord,
Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient,
and moſt humble ſervant,
GILB. STUART.

LONDON,
Southampton Buildings,
Holborn, No. 13,
28*th Nov.* 1782.

Paper XIV.

Note *to* MATTHEW ROBINSON, Eſq; *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

BURTON-HALL, *Nov.* 21, 1782.

MR. WYVILL preſents his compliments to Mr. Robinſon; tranſmits for his peruſal the incloſed Copy of a Letter from the Yorkſhire Committee to Lord Mahon, and other Chairmen of Aſſociated Bodies throughout the Kingdom; and ſhould be happy to find the Propoſitions of Reform contained in it are honoured with his approbation. Mr. Wyvill believes it is to Mr. Robinſon he is indebted for an excellent paper in ſupport of the Kentiſh Petition, which he received ſome time ago from Mr. Dalton; and which ſoon after appeared in moſt of the Northern Prints, and was much and very generally admired. Mr. Robinſon, he hopes, will have the goodneſs to excuſe the tardineſs of his acknowledgements, as he wiſhed to communicate, not merely his own inſignificant opinion, but, as far as he could collect it, that of the Yorkſhire Committee, on Mr. Robinſon's Plan for improving the ſtate of our Borough-Repreſentation, *without amputation*. That the remedy propoſed would be efficacious, no one can doubt; but as the intereſt of every Borough in the Kingdom would be ſo materially affected by the change, there ſeems no probability that ſuch a Regulation could

could be eſtabliſhed by any pacific means.—The utmoſt oppoſition from the Boroughs might be expected; and if it were poſſible the Counties could overpower them in Parliament, they might with equal eaſe, and a ſtill better effect, amputate them at once. For reaſons like theſe, the Yorkſhire Gentlemen deemed it neceſſary to endeavour to gain the aſſiſtance of the great towns, &c. by pointing out the little decayed Boroughs to the number of fifty, as the proper objects of Reformation. Imperfect as that Reform would be, it would probably ſecure the Conſtitution for generations to come; and, if the County of Kent, and other reſpectable Bodies, would unite with Yorkſhire in the requeſt, there ſeems reaſon to hope it might be carried in the preſent ſituation of the Cabinet and the Country.

Paper XV.

Letter *from* WILLIAM BELCHAMP, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

BEDFORD, *Nov.* 25, 1782.

Sir,

I Have juſt ſeen in the public papers a Letter written by you as Preſident of the Committee of Aſſociation for the County of York, addreſſed to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, containing a Plan of Parliamentary Reform of a moſt dangerous tendency. To diſfranchiſe

disfranchiſe 50 Boroughs, and to add 100 Members to the Counties, would throw ſuch prodigious weight into the ſcale of the Landed Intereſt, as in effect to convert the Conſtitution into an Ariſtocracy. The preſent ſyſtem of Repreſentation, though undoubtedly defective and corrupt, produces, upon the whole, effects highly beneficial to the Community. So violent an alteration, therefore, certainly cannot be neceſſary. The probable conſequences of ſo extraordinary a meaſure ſhould be moſt maturely weighed; and it will require no uncommon ſagacity to foreſee the manifold and fatal evils which muſt enſue from any mode of Reformation which will for ever ſecure to the Landed Intereſt the moſt complete aſcendency in the Houſe of Commons. The Commercial Spirit and Commercial Intereſt have, happily for the Nation, predominated in that Houſe for a century paſt; for the great body of the People participating in the ſame ſpirit, and being united in the ſame intereſt, it has happened, notwithſtanding the groſs defects chargeable on the preſent ſyſtem of Repreſentation, that this Country has enjoyed a degree of Liberty unexampled in any former age, unknown in any other Country, and I would eagerly retain the preſent Conſtitution, with all its imperfections, rather than adopt a plan, be it ever ſo plauſible, or even beautiful in theory, which, by inveſting a ſet of men, I mean the Country Gentlemen, however reſpectable, with a diſproportionate ſhare of power and

influence,

influence, muſt prove more deſtructive to the cauſe of Liberty than the moſt open and avowed, or, what is ſtill more dangerous, the moſt ſecret and concealed influence of the Crown itſelf.

After condemning in ſo explicit a manner the Plan of Reform propoſed in the Letter, I ſhall offer my own ſentiments with regard to this very delicate and debateable point.

In order that the opinions and prejudices of a great part of the Nation may not receive too violent a ſhock, I would recommend a Plan of Reform which ſhould be gradual and progreſſive. The idea of diſfranchiſing 50 of the ſmalleſt and moſt corrupt Boroughs, is excellent; but this cannot be done in one Seſſion, without exciting general alarm. Try the experiment with ten or a dozen, and let the enfranchiſements be always equal in number to the diſfranchiſements.—What I mean is, whenever an obnoxious Borough is deprived of its Right of Election, let the ſame Right be conferred on ſome one of the many large towns which at preſent ſend no Member to Parliament. It may be objected poſſibly that this is a privilege which few of theſe towns wiſh for, that it may excite tumults, riots, &c. I anſwer, if they do not wiſh for it, they ought to do ſo, and it is a right they ſhould be compelled to exerciſe for the good of the community; and riots and tumults might eaſily be prevented, if the mode of electing by ballot, and other ſalutary reſtrictions and regulations, were eſtabliſhed among them.

them. The extenſion of the Right of Election in many Boroughs which it might not be adviſable to diſfranchiſe, would be another highly-conſtitutional branch of Political Reformation, and it might be done, as it has already been in more than one inſtance, with general applauſe.

With regard to the additional Repreſentation for the City of London, though I ſhould not much object to increaſing the number of her Members to ſix, and that of Weſtminſter to four, I am of opinion that this vaſt Metropolis, upon the whole, enjoys her due rank in the political ſcale, nor ſhould I by any means wiſh to ſee her weight and influence in Parliament ſo much increaſed as to give her the ſmalleſt encouragement to dictate to that Aſſembly, as Amſterdam has often done to the States of Holland. The argument drawn from the great proportion of the whole property of the Nation ſhe poſſeſſes, is apparently fallacious: the invaluable treaſure of Liberty is, or ought to be, equally divided among all claſſes of People.

I intended to have made a few Remarks upon the other parts of your Plan, but find myſelf at the end of my paper.*

I remain, with great reſpect, Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

WM. BELCHAMP.

Paper XVI.

* This Letter, in oppoſition to the Plan of the Yorkſhire Committee, was read and duly conſidered at their next Meeting, but no anſwer was directed to be returned. It never had been expected that their propoſal would find an Approver in every Friend of Liberty. It was thought by ſome not ſufficiently favourable to the Landed Intereſt; by others, hoſtile to the Commercial Intereſt; by ſome, not ſufficiently extenſive; by others, too extenſive to be practicable.

Paper XVI.

Letter *from* Sir WILLIAM CODRINGTON, Bart. *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

I Received your favour by the laſt poſt, and I ſee a Meeting is appointed at Glouceſter on the 2d of December. I wiſh there may be time to hear from you on ſome difficulties that occur to me.

I wiſh moſt earneſtly that the decayed Boroughs may be aboliſhed, *upon principle*, and by *general regulation*. A ſelection even of the moſt

practicable. This they underſtood, but they were neither ſurpriſed nor diſcouraged. Amidſt theſe jarring opinions, the Committee ſtood unmoved on the ground they had taken, and as much as poſſible avoided controverſy, except with the Advocates of Corruption and of Abuſe by which Corruption is engendered.

The principal difficulty ſtated by Mr. Belchamp ſeems, however, to have admitted a ſolution *at the time*; for Facts appear to have overthrown his reaſonings. The two Adminiſtrations of Sir Robert Walpole, and Lord North had been long ſupported by a majority of the Borough Repreſentatives, againſt the ſenſe of the Public. At laſt the wiſh of the Nation was gratified by the oppoſition of a ſtill greater majority of the County Members. The Crown and the major part of the Peerage were out-voted in the Houſe of Commons, chiefly by means of that Repreſentation which the County of York wiſhed to reinforce, and which appeared to Mr. Belchamp unfriendly to Liberty. And in the inſtance laſt alluded to, meaſures tending to ſecure Public Freedom, in a conſiderable degree, had actually been accompliſhed, in conſequence of Lord North's expulſion from Office. To leſſen the number of obnoxious Boroughs, and to augment the County Repreſentation in the manner propoſed, were meaſures ſtill more efficacious to reſtore its due tone and vigour to the Conſtitutional Organ of the National Will. And had they alſo been obtained, a farther extenſion of the Right of Election would have been the probable conſequence. This might have been foreſeen *at the time*; although the Committee feared to ſtate it, leſt by multiplying the Demands of Reformation the whole might be loſt. And in this point of view, the plan and conduct of the Committee, if duly conſidered by Mr. Belchamp, might have met his approbation and ſupport, inſtead of cenſure and oppoſition.

Afterwards

moſt obnoxious, may create ſuch difficulties as to fruſtrate the Plan: the Crown and the Proprietors may be too ſtrong for us: perſonal defence and perſonal friendſhip will have their effect; and though public conſiderations ought to prevail, they probably would not.—I wiſh too I could at any rate ſee more Knights

Afterwards, in 1784, what Mr. Belſham terms *their meaſured idea* was offered to Parliament by Mr. Pitt, with a new principle ſuper-added to it, which ſeems to have freed their plan from any material objection; at leaſt, in a degree ſufficient for the occaſion. It was then propoſed that Birmingham and other large unrepreſented Towns ſhould be allowed to return Members to Parliament; and that in certain large Towns, ſuch as Bath, Scarborough, &c. in which the Right of Election is monopolized by a few Members of a Corporation, that Right ſhould be extended to other Inhabitants. In the Towns of each claſs, it was propoſed to extend the Right of Suffrage to all Houſeholders paying Taxes. This meaſure, though but the partial introduction of a Right Principle, would have produced a Reform whoſe immediate effects would have been highly valuable; and whoſe remoter tendency was, by the extenſion of that principle to Houſeholders paying Taxes throughout the kingdom, to introduce that final improvement of the Conſtitution, under which Private Property and Public Liberty would be equally ſecure. The immediate benefits of the meaſure, and its more diſtant tendency, were ſeen by the Country Gentlemen of Yorkſhire, &c. and Mr. Pitt received their moſt zealous concurrence.

Since that time, propoſals have been offered to Parliament for a farther extenſion of this principle; firſt by Mr. Flood, who in 1790 took it as the ground for an addition of 100 Members to be choſen by Voters of that deſcription only who are now unrepreſented: and at a later period, it was recommended by Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, as a general rule in all Elections throughout the kingdom.—By theſe ſteps and gradations has the plan of Moderate Reform been brought to its perfection in principle. And now, ſhould the Nation recover from that trance of infatuation in which it has been held too long by the deluſions of a Miniſter ſo often praiſed, ſo often cenſured in theſe Papers; ſhould its jealouſy of Mr. Fox and his Friends be overcome by their wiſdom, magnanimity, and ſtrict adherence to the principles of the Conſtitution, and ſhould its dread of Reform yield at laſt to the ſtrong neceſſity for it, which is now more apparent than ever, the Right of Suffrage will undoubtedly be conceded to Houſeholders paying Taxes; and the objections ſtated in this Letter againſt the Abolition of the ſmaller Boroughs, and the Increaſe of County Members, will be completely removed.

of

of Shires returned. But if ſuch new Knights were to have higher qualifications by property than at preſent, and if they were to be choſen by a ſuperior claſs of Electors, perſons capable of judging, and above the reach of private corruption, there would be a dignity of character introduced into Parliament very conducive to public virtue, not only in the Perſons ſo honourably choſen, but in the general maſs of Members.

As to ſhortening the Duration of Parliaments, though a very popular idea, yet to me it ſeems a very ſerious matter, till ſome other Reforms take place; for I think that the Crown, by its increaſed influence, gains upon us very much at every General Election. Frequency of Elections, upon their preſent footing, would make the Gentry more dependent, by their natural effects of a ruinous expence to the Elected. Trading Towns and Manufacturing Counties are grievouſly hurt by our preſent mode of Electioneering. What has been the effect in Ireland? Has the Iriſh Parliament been leſs corrupt ſince their Octennial Bill? I believe not. I ſuſpect the Elected, as well as the Electors, to be grown more corrupt.

The admitting of Copyhold-Freeholders of 40 s. may admit of objection; as alſo the loading upon our backs, in General Reform, the moſt venal part of the Kingdom, in a caſe of partial regulation. No doubt, they ought to be ſupported, and would be; but it ſeems to me that partial or local conſiderations ſhould be left out of a Plan of General Regulation.

lation. Scotland will profit in common by the General Plan.

I perceive you think the whole of your Propoſals may now be accompliſhed. I very much doubt it; but I wiſh exceedingly that ſome progreſs may be made: and I ſhall be very glad to be ſhewn that the difficulties and objections that occur to me are ideal only.

I am, dear Sir,

Your very obedient
and very humble ſervant,
W. CODRINGTON.

Saturday,
Nov. 23, 1782. *Dodington.*

Paper XVII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Sir WILLIAM CODRINGTON, Bart.

BURTON-HALL, *Nov.* 29, 1782.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE juſt received your favour, dated Dodington, Nov. 23d; and as the County of Glouceſter will meet on the 2d of December, it is impoſſible, before the Meeting, to convey my anſwer by the poſt. You therefore will receive it * by an Expreſs acroſs the country, which I hope may arrive at Glouceſter in good time.

* A Copy of this Letter was alſo ſent by the ſame Expreſs to Sir George Oneſiphorus Paul, Bart.

As you and your friend Sir G. Paul ſeem to agree with the Yorkſhire Gentlemen in the principal articles of Parliamentary Reformation, viz. the addition of Knights, and the abolition of the moſt obnoxious Boroughs, the difficulties which have occurred to you and to him may perhaps admit a ſatisfactory ſolution. I am far, however, from thinking them ideal; much leſs do I mean to repreſent *the whole propoſal* as bearing any high probability of immediate ſucceſs; although, from the correſpondence I have lately held with men in office poſterior to the meſſage from Lord Shelburne, which I communicated ſome time ago, I do believe the Cabinet is well diſpoſed to promote, *to a certain degree*, the Improvement of our Repreſentation in Parliament. The Papers on which this aſſurance is grounded, ſhall be communicated to you, and Sir G. Paul, when I have the pleaſure to ſee you in Town; and ſo far as this aſſurance reſpects Lord Shelburne, I ſhall then produce indubitable evidence, that his Lordſhip ſtands pledged to ſupport the Aſſociation of the County of York.

The difficulty of the attempt being on all ſides admitted, it behoves us to conſider well how thoſe difficulties may be overcome; how the Counties applying for a Reformation of Parliament may beſt acquire ſtrength; and the obnoxious Boroughs, at the ſame time, may be diſabled from making any effectual oppoſition to the application of the Counties.

To

To the preſent Freeholders the addition of Knights, and the abolition of certain Boroughs are obvious advantages, which will probably ſecure their general ſupport. But by propoſing a ſuperior claſs of Voters, there would be great danger of loſing the good-will of the inferior Electors. Whereas the communication of the Election-Right to the Forty-ſhilling Copyholders, would be conſidered by the lower claſs of Freeholders as an addition to their own weight, as it would be to the ſtrength of the Landed Intereſt. By that meaſure alſo, the Augmentation of County Members would be rendered more evidently reaſonable; and a full compenſation would be obtained for the great number of Electors disfranchiſed, very properly, by the Revenue Officers Act.

For the ſame purpoſe of gaining ſtrength, it ſeems adviſable to limit the demand of the abolition of rotten Boroughs to Fifty; altho' many Boroughs not ſtrictly defenſible in theory might remain untouched. Let the *little decayed Boroughs, to the number of Fifty*, be ſtruck at, as the objects of Reformation, and all not fairly comprehended in that deſcription will be ſafe. Many principal Towns, and many Gentlemen poſſeſſed of intereſt in Boroughs not likely to be affected by the change, might then reaſonably be expected to encourage the application; and by their aſſiſtance, the deſired Reformation might be accompliſhed *by pacific means*.——By ſtriking off Fifty of the moſt obnoxious Boroughs, ac-

cording to that deſcription, not more than 1500 perſons would be disfranchiſed. But the detail of the buſineſs ought to be left to the Houſe of Commons. Aſſemblies of the People at large can never ſettle the proportion of Knights to be added to the ſeveral Counties, nor aſcertain what Boroughs may juſtly be deemed the moſt obnoxious, and fitteſt to be aboliſhed. They cannot enter with propriety into the diſcuſſion of ſuch matters, becauſe they never could come to any agreement. They may point out the principle, and ſpecify the extent of that Reformation which they deſire, but all beyond that is within the proper province of Parliament, and to Parliament it muſt be ſubmitted.

If the Repreſentation of the People could be corrected to the degree propoſed by the Yorkſhire Gentlemen, hardly a doubt would remain but that regulations for leſſening the expence, and other inconveniences of Elections, might be obtained, in ſpite of Royal or Ariſtocratical oppoſition. The neceſſity of ſuch regulations would even be greater and more manifeſt, after the addition of Knights, than it is at preſent. But the Friends to an additional County Repreſentation are alſo Friends in general to fair and incorrupt Election. And I have been lately aſſured by the noble Lord * who laſt winter offered a Bill to Parliament for theſe ſalutary purpoſes, that he is not diſcouraged by his repulſe, that he

* Earl Stanhope.

ſees the meaſure to be neceſſary, and means to offer his Bill again, with every emendation he can give it.—In all probability the two meaſures will fall together, or they will both ſucceed. If the latter event ſhould fortunately befal us, the objection to ſhorten Parliaments, which has ſtruck you and Sir G. Paul alike, would probably loſe its force. I own myſelf no zealous friend to more frequent Elections, unleſs Elections can be put upon a better footing. As a ſingle meaſure, I am not clear that a ſhorter duration of Parliaments would produce the good effects which ſome Gentlemen expect from it. But taken as part of a plan in which a more equal Repreſentation is provided, it ſeems to be an unexceptionable meaſure, becauſe the reduction of expence muſt follow the introduction of more County Members. And in ſaying this, I advance nothing which has not been already expreſſed or plainly implied in our Form of Aſſociation, which I incloſe for your peruſal.

And for the article reſpecting nominal or fictitious Votes in the Scotch Counties, the inſertion of it is perfectly conſiſtent with our general principle of Reformation. The Scotch Counties at preſent are in the condition of our worſt Boroughs. I have been informed by the Repreſentative of Orkney Shire * that of ſeventy-five thouſand inhabitants in that County, about *thirty* only have Votes. In other Counties the abuſe is ſtill

* The much-reſpected Charles Dundas, Eſq; now Repreſentative of the County of Berks.

more flagrant. To allow perſons of landed property there to vote, as we do in England, is merely a matter of juſtice to them; but to the Public a meaſure of great advantage, as it would be the means of converting what is truly conſidered as a moſt venal part of the Houſe of Commons, into a ſet of honeſt, independent County Members. At leaſt, this would be the caſe in many inſtances, which on the preſent ſyſtem is not to be expected. But the good policy of the meaſure is ſtill more apparent, to my apprehenſion, when it is conſidered that, by ſupporting the claims of the Scotch Counties, we ſhall probably obtain their ſupport to our more extenſive and more important improvements of the Conſtitution. The Letters I have hitherto received from Scotland induce me to think the hope of aſſiſtance from that quarter of the kingdom is not ill-founded.

I have only to add, that I ſhould be truly happy to find that any thing I have been able to ſuggeſt may have contributed to remove your ſcruples, or thoſe of Sir G. Paul. The concurrence of your reſpectable County, at ſo early a period, would undoubtedly give a moſt important ſanction to the propoſal of the Yorkſhire Committee.

I am, dear Sir, truly your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XVIII.

Paper XVIII.

Letter *from* Profeſſor FERGUSON *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

EDINBURGH, *2d Dec.* 1782.

Rev. Sir,

YOU have done me a great deal of honour in making me the conveyance of a *propoſal from the Committee of Aſſociation in the County of York for a Reformation of Parliament, and for the extenſion and better regulation of the Right of Election to Parliament throughout the Kingdom.* I took the firſt opportunity my health would allow to communicate the contents of your packet to Mr. Ilay Campbell, a gentleman of the firſt character in this country, who, I underſtood, was employed in preparing the draft of a Bill relating to the Right of Election in Scotland, and am deſired to return his thanks to you and the other Gentlemen of the Yorkſhire Committee. This matter is under conſideration here, chiefly with a view to reform a ſuppoſed abuſe which has recently crept into the manner of conſtituting qualifications to vote at County Elections. Perſons having extenſive ſuperiorities in this part of the kingdom parcel them out to their retainers and friends in ſuch manner as to multiply Voters without increaſing the number of Votes, the perſon who confers theſe qualifications being underſtood to diſpoſe of the Votes as he pleaſes.

Of thoſe concerned in this Reform, many, no doubt, are willing to reduce the qualifications of Votes ſo as to increaſe their number; but this, like many other Reformations, I am told, muſt be the work of time and ſome caution. My own earneſt wiſh has long been, that we had the ſame Law of Parliament with you as far as relates to County Elections; but I confeſs that I do not hope ever to obtain it.

I am very happy that my writings make me be conſidered as a ſincere friend of the Conſtitution; being ſo little able to ſerve it in practice, the leaſt I can do is to pay it all due reſpect in my ſpeculations. One of its beauties is, that it can withſtand many evils without being overthrown. I know nothing ſo likely to be fatal to it as the weakneſs and cowardice of thoſe on whom its preſervation depends; and I ſincerely believe, that to preſerve the Rights of the People, the vigour of the Crown is not leſs neceſſary than their own. To make us as happy as our Conſtitution would admit of, requires indeed many other conditions, which I hope we ſhall long improve or retain. *

I have the honour to be,
With great reſpect,
Rev. Sir,
Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,
ADAM FERGUSON.

Paper XIX.

* This valuable Letter appears to have been intended by the Profeſſor to be communicated to the Yorkſhire Committee; and it was communicated accordingly. It is therefore a Public Letter, on a ſubject much diſputed at that time, and on which the ſentiments

Paper XIX.

Note *from* MATTHEW ROBINSON, Esq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

MR. ROBINSON returns his compliments to Mr. Wyvill for the honour of the Letter that he has received from him, the contents of which are of so much consequence that he will take the liberty to signify in general,

sentiments of good and able men still differ very widely. The judgment of Professor Ferguson will always carry with it much weight; and for that reason it would be improper to withhold from the public eye the opinion which will be found here rather concisely intimated than fully explained. And as that opinion is not conformable with the sentiments of the Yorkshire Committee, for that very reason it would be still more improper to conceal it. It would be ungenerous to suppress what was briefly said, with the greatest appearance of wisdom, by such a man, to dissuade their attempt of Reformation; but the Editor trusts he may be allowed to subjoin a few short explanatory remarks.

In justice, therefore, to the Yorkshire Gentlemen, he declares the conviction he always felt, that it was not their design to attack the just prerogative of the Crown. They apprehended danger, not from its lawful power, but from the exorbitant influence which it had acquired, less perhaps from craft and a premeditated scheme of aggrandisement, than from accident and unforeseen events. They respected the Nobles; they revered the Monarch; and they adored the Constitution on its genuine principles; but they despised, abhorred, and successfully resisted the Ministers of Corruption, and their profligate system.

In the course of their exertions, in opposition to that system, they were aided by many Counties, &c. and supported by the best and wisest Statesmen of the age. After a struggle rather sharp than long, the base influence alluded to was overcome: In a moment of generous shame and remorse, a confession was obtained from the self-accusing Assembly, "That the Influence of the Crown had increased, and ought to be diminished." If this were *weakness and cowardice*, it was the weakness of returning virtue; it was the cowardice of men who feared the stings of infamy and conscience, and durst not in the face of day hazard a broad contradiction to the public opinion and their own conviction. Unfortunately

neral, and in a ſhort manner, his ſentiments upon them, which he does with the utmoſt reſpect to Mr. Wyvill.

Mr. R. now is, and always has been of opinion to mix no other matter whatſoever with the propoſition of increaſing the Members of Parliament for the Counties and the Metropolis,

tunately this was but a tranſient enthuſiaſm; it was too virtuous to be laſting, and too fleeting to produce any eſſential Reform, though ſome correction of abuſes in the expenditure was extorted by the firmneſs of Lord Rockingham. After his death, the Aſſembly ſoon reverted to its habitual feelings: attempts to infuſe ſome portion of health and popular vigour into the Conſtitution were made by a ſubſequent Miniſter, and repeatedly rejected. In a few years after thoſe unſucceſsful efforts to reſtore the Repreſentation, a new ſyſtem of Terror and Undue Influence was introduced by the Miniſter of Reform himſelf; and combining it with the miſeries of a moſt calamitous war, he nearly drove the Nation into the gulph of Revolution. Since the expulſion of the Stuarts, England had never groaned under more oppreſſive meaſures; and never did it expreſs more exultation than at the proſpect of a deliverance by the recent Peace.—But for what purpoſe was this complicated ſyſtem of domeſtic crimes and miſeries adopted? Doubtleſs, that a ſcheme of internal coercion might check the ſpirit of innovation, and guard the Conſtitution againſt the poſſible exceſſes of Reformers! And among other avowed objects of the war with France, this was the principal, and the leaſt chimerical. Has not the experiment been tried with perſevering ardour, and at a moſt enormous expence, till even the State-Empirics themſelves were ſatiated? And yet, is it not certain that a large portion of the Nation are ſtill true to the genuine principles of the Conſtitution; ſtill ready to exclaim with Savile and Chatham, that Reform alone can prevent a Revolution? Have not they by whom the experiment was conducted laid waſte the Conſtitution, and ſet public opinion at defiance? Have not their meaſures produced the Inſolvency of our National Bank, and a Taxation galling to the pride of Independence, and deſtructive of Family comfort? Has not the conſequence been in Britain a Famine aggravated by War, and in Ireland a general Inſurrection, which in its courſe ſpread deſolation through the land, from the ſtruggle of military rigour on one ſide, and political animoſity and religious rage on the other? Who is ſo inhuman that he can conſider theſe calamities, and the miſery of a great part of the civilized world, without feeling the deepeſt regret? Or who ſo prejudiced, that he does not

polis, but to preſs with all might and main that point ſingly by itſelf.

He meant to offer the idea of introducing perſons poſſeſſed of fifty pounds a-year in fee ſimple to vote with the Electors of Boroughs, only as a diſtant and ſucceſſive conſideration.

not now ſuſpect that theſe mighty evils might have been avoided, by timely moderation, and the adoption of thoſe prudent propoſitions of Reform which were offered to Parliament in 1785? From the documents in theſe volumes it cannot reaſonably be doubted that the Conſtitutional Improvements then propoſed by Mr. Pitt would have contented the great Body of Reformers, and the ſpirit of Republican Innovation would have been extinguiſhed in the general ſatisfaction of the Nation. In that caſe, the revolutionary ſtorm in France could not have endangered the happineſs of Britain; its rage would have been diſcharged on the Continent alone: our Conſtitution and the Peace with France would have remained unbroken. Pretences for adopting a ſyſtem of War and Coercion would neither have been found nor ſought. Our Rights would have been ſecure; our Freedom invulnerable, under the protection of a real Repreſentative; and the Nation, conſcious of its enviable felicity, would have enjoyed the ſunſhine of proſperity, unclouded by fears and jealouſies, and undiſturbed by alarms of Commotion, and the perils of an exterminating War.

There is a falſe maxim of policy which many have embraced, that it is unſafe for the Public to countenance, and unbecoming in Government to grant even moderate demands, even manifeſt improvements in the Conſtitution, when preſſed for by Popular Petition. To this prejudice we may juſtly impute the paſt calamities we have been lamenting, and the calamities which ſtill threaten us. Our Conſtitution admits, and in compliance with Public opinion it has received many improvements, and in fact it became more ſecurely confirmed by conceſſion. At laſt, therefore, it may be hoped that worthy men will profit by their experience, and adopt a leſs fallacious rule of conduct; that they will be at leaſt as jealous of the ambition and corruption of the Court, as of the levity and violence of the People: and when meaſures calculated to check and reſtrain each of theſe pernicious evils may be again agitated, that they will not again lend the countenance of their authority to prolong acknowledged abuſes, and encourage the Conſtituted Authorities to reject Propoſals of Reform, though approved by the Public, though mild and equitable, agreeable to the principles of the Conſtitution, and conſiſtent with the Laws and with the peace of Society.

He

He perfectly approves cutting off fifty Boroughs of the fewest Voters, if it can be done, but he fears that it will be found peculiarly difficult or impracticable; because it will be little less than by name turning out of this present Parliament, or leaving out of the next, one hundred Members now actually possessed of Seats in the House of Commons.

He likewise exceedingly wishes for short, and particularly for annual Parliaments; but he conceives, that the House of Commons must be very much reformed, before there are the least hopes or probability that they will shorten their own duration.

One hundred new Members once introduced on the principles of Liberty and the Constitution, and inclined in general to act on the same grounds, might, and in all appearance would be of the utmost assistance towards obtaining these other just and salutary points.

Mr. R. however, mentions these things for no purpose of contradiction or opposition. He shall most sincerely and earnestly wish success to whatever plan for reforming our Representation and restoring our Constitution shall be preferred by the County of York, of Middlesex, the City of London, and the other leading Bodies of the Nation.

HORTON, *near* HYTHE,
12*th Dec.* 1782.

Paper XX.

Paper XX.

Letter *from the* Rev. Dr. PRICE *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

NEWINGTON GREEN, *Dec.* 12, 1782.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

I CANNOT make myſelf eaſy without ſending you theſe lines to thank you for the note with which you have honoured me, and for the communication which accompanied it of the Letter to the Weſtminſter Committee. I wiſh alſo to lay before you my ſentiments on the ſubject of that Letter. I think it indeed a moſt proper Letter, and I approve entirely of all the points of Reformation mentioned in it; but at the ſame time I cannot help being ſorry for the intimation in it, that, in order to gain unanimity, the Yorkſhire Committee is ready to ſacrifice its wiſhes with reſpect to the abolition of ſome of the moſt corrupt Boroughs. This I reckon the moſt important of all the points of Reformation, there being no abuſe ſo flagrant as that a few beggars, ſubject to the Treaſury, Admiralty, &c. ſhould poſſeſs the power of chuſing the majority of that Aſſembly which makes our laws, and diſpoſes of our lives and fortunes. The addition of a hundred Knights to the Counties, without the removal of this abuſe, will, in my opinion, do us little good. This is the time for ſtruggling, when other Counties

Counties are happily emancipating themſelves, and when our Miniſters themſelves are favourable to the views of the People, and have pledged themſelves to ſupport them. Such another opportunity for ſtruggling ſucceſsfully may never offer itſelf; and if we ſtruggle, it ought to be for ſomething worth the having. Your County is giving a noble example. Much may be expected from its weight and influence. May Heaven grant ſucceſs to the preſent endeavours of the honeſt and enlightened part of the Nation, to procure for it a *real* Repreſentation, inſtead of that mockery which now bears that name. Till this can be procured, we deceive ourſelves when we think ourſelves free; the firſt requiſite to Conſtitutional Liberty being a fair and equal Repreſentation. Your exertions, Sir, in this cauſe, muſt be long remembered. Your merit is above any praiſe that can be beſtowed upon it. Accept the gratitude, the ardent reſpect, and beſt wiſhes of

Sir,

Your moſt obedient
and humble ſervant,
RICH. PRICE.

Paper XXI.

Paper XXI.

Letter *from* JOHN SINCLAIR, Eſq; *(afterwards* Sir JOHN SINCLAIR, Bart.) *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I AM favoured with your Circular Letter of the 27th current, together with ſome printed papers relative to the reſpectable Aſſociation of the County of York, which I have tranſmitted by this poſt to the Freeholders I have the honour to repreſent in Parliament.

It gave me pleaſure to find by your Letter that the County of York is determined to recommend ſome ſpecific propoſition to the conſideration of the Legiſlature; and as queſtions of Reform are not new to me, I hope you will excuſe me for troubling you with my ſentiments upon the ſubject.

I have taken the liberty of ſending you, by this poſt, three Tracts relative to Parliamentary Reformation. The firſt (which is entitled *Lucubrations during a Short Receſs*) contains a Plan of Reform which, in many reſpects, reſembles that which the York Committee ſeem deſirous of recommending. It was a very haſty performance, which was written by me with a view of ſounding the feelings both of Parliament and of the People relative to ſpecific propoſitions: its principal merit is, that it drew forth the ſenti-

ments

ments of a very reſpectable Senator: at leaſt the ſecond Tract which is ſent, entitled *A Letter to the Author of the Lucubrations during a Short Receſs*, is attributed to Mr. Thomas Pitt, Member for Old Sarum. His ideas of Reformation, however, extend no farther than an increaſe of County Members, without any Borough alteration. My writing upon this ſubject, and in conſequence thereof having been favoured with the opinions of many Members of the Houſe upon the Tract that I have written, has enabled me to judge pretty nearly to what length it is probable that Parliament will be prevailed upon to go in reſpect of a Reformation: I was led from thence to write a ſecond Tract, called *Reflections on the Expediency of increaſing the preſent Number of the Repreſentatives of the People*, which, though printed, is not as yet publiſhed; but three copies of which I beg leave to ſend for your private peruſal, and that of the principal Friends of Reformation in your neighbourhood.

The Plan which it recommends is of two kinds: Firſt, it joins Mr. Pitt in propoſing an addition of 55 Members to the Counties; but, in the ſecond place, it eſtabliſhes the foundation of a gradual Reform in the Conſtitution of our Boroughs, but does not propoſe that any of them ſhould be totally annihilated.

The obſtacles that are in the way of purchaſing the Legiſlative Rights of Boroughs, would be very difficult to overcome: many have the complete command of a Borough, the

the value of whose property it is almoſt impoſſible to aſcertain. If thoſe rights were to be purchaſed, it would require at leaſt a million, which, in the conception of ſome, this Country, in its preſent ſituation, is not able to afford. But, if theſe and other difficulties were removed, I am ſtill convinced that ſo many are tied down, by connexion or perſonal intereſt, to ſupport the exiſtence of theſe little Boroughs, that any attempt to annihilate them will be found ineffectual; whereas, was the Plan which I have ventured to ſuggeſt in the ſecond Tract ſupported by the County of York, and by other reſpectable bodies, I have little doubt of its proving ſucceſsful; and I am humbly of opinion, that ſuch a Reform would ſufficiently reduce the Influence of the Crown, and ſufficiently ſecure the Liberties of the People.

I HAVE received the favour of your Letter, in which you mention to delay publiſhing this little work until next ſpring, when the ſubject will probably come before Parliament; but if you, and thoſe Gentlemen to whom theſe Papers may be communicated, are of opinion that the County of York would probably give their ſuppott to ſuch a Plan at their Meeting, on the 19th of December, I ſhould with great pleaſure publiſh the Pamphlet ſooner, and would immediately ſend ſome copies of the Plan to be diſtributed in the County.

Being engaged in the ſame important duty will, I hope, be a ſufficient apology for my

troubling you with so long a letter. I have the honour to be with the greatest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient
and very humble servant,
JOHN SINCLAIR.

Harley-Street to Westminster,
28th Nov. 1782.

Paper XXII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* JOHN SINCLAIR, Esq.

Burton-Hall, *Dec.* 14, 1782.

Sir,

I HAVE received the favour of your Letter of November 28th, in answer to the Circular Letter of the Yorkshire Committee, which I shall have an opportunity to lay before the Committee on the 17th instant, previous to the intended General Meeting of the County of York. With that Letter I also received, under several covers, the obliging communication of your two Essays on the subject of Parliamentary Reformation, with Mr. T. Pitt's Letter; for all which I beg you to accept my best acknowledgments. The Gentlemen in this neighbourhood, to whom your second Tract has been sent, have not enabled me to report their sentiments upon the subject;

ject; and I can ſtill leſs pretend to form any judgment what would be the general opinion of the Yorkſhire Committee. I will not, therefore, trouble you with any difficulties which have occurred to an individual like me, on conſidering the propoſitions advanced in your ſecond Tract, becauſe I am conſcious my ſolitary opinion would not deſerve a moment's conſideration.

But I can with great truth and ſatisfaction aſſure you, Sir, that *your Lucubrations* have been highly approved in Yorkſhire, by many of the Friends to Conſtitutional Improvements; and although it is poſſible the reaſons you allege for giving up the abolition of certain Boroughs, may not induce them to depart from the propoſals of the Circular Letter, yet they muſt ever reſpect your zeal and public ſpirit, and unremitted attention to the cauſe of Parliamentary Reformation.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XXIII.

Extract of a Letter from JOHN SINCLAIR, Esq; to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I THOUGHT it unnecessary to trouble you with an answer to the Letter I had the honour of receiving from you, until I had heard what Resolutions the respectable Committee of the County of York came to at their last Meeting. The Papers of this morning brought me that intelligence. You may easily suppose that no man can be a warmer friend to the specific proposition recommended by that Committee, than the Author of the Lucubrations. I had entertained some doubts how far it was possible to carry such a system through both Houses of Parliament; but now my hopes are re-animated by those examples of Public Virtue which have lately appeared in your County. The conduct of Lord Galway, Mr. Peirse, &c. must be attended with the happiest consequence; and in other parts of the Kingdom I hope that men will be found ready, like them, to sacrifice their own private interests to the general welfare of their Country.

It is my intention, therefore, to publish another Edition of "The Lucubrations during a Short Recess," and to suppress the other publication upon the same subject. As the title is rather indefinite, I have some thoughts of adding,

adding, "Containing the General Principles of the Plan of Parliamentary Reform, recommended by the County of York." It would be improper, however, to make that addition, unleſs I had reaſon to believe that your Committee had that Tract in view when the ſpecific propoſition of the County of York was originally determined.

I ſhould reckon myſelf under ſingular obligations to you for a ſtate of the number of Voters in the different Boroughs in your neighbourhood. It is impoſſible without the aſſiſtance of Parliament to give an exact liſt of all the Electors in the Kingdom; but it would be deſirable to have as few errors as poſſible in the account.

I hope you will excuſe the liberty I have taken in making this requeſt.*

I have the honour to be with reſpect,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient

and very humble ſervant,

JOHN SINCLAIR.

PARK-STREET, WESTMINSTER,
24th Dec. 1782.

* From the contents of the correſpondence with Sir J. Sinclair, it appears to have been of a public nature, and with his approbation to have been communicated to the Yorkſhire Committee. There can be no reaſon, therefore, of delicacy or propriety why Sir J. Sinclair's ſhare of it ſhould not be communicated to the Public. If there had been any ſuch reaſon, it would have been ſuppreſſed, but not without regret on the part of the Editor. His Collection would have appeared imperfect, if no memorial had appeared in it of the warm intereſt which Sir J. Sinclair took, at an early period, in the attempt of the County of York to effect a Reformation of Parliament.

Paper XXIV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* JOHN SINCLAIR, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan.* 3, 1783.

Sir,

THE incloſed Abſtract is much at your ſervice, and I believe you may depend upon its being exact, or nearly ſo. I wiſh you may procure accurate information from other parts of the Kingdom. The more completely you exhibit the Parliamentary Abuſes complained of, men of real Patriotiſm in Parliament will be the better enabled to take proper meaſures for correcting them. That was conſidered as one great merit of your Lucubrations, which certainly made the defective State of our Repreſentation better and more generally known than it was before. But Popular Meetings will never go far into the detail of Reformation; or, if they do attempt it, they will unavoidably run into diſſentions, and ſo ruin the whole undertaking. All *We* can pretend to do out of doors, is to point out the grievance, and ſpecify the principle on which we wiſh redreſs may be granted by *You* within. And even thus far it is exceedingly difficult for the Collective Bodies of different diſtricts to proceed, without ſome breach of union, as you have probably obſerved.

The

The principle of Reformation recommended by the Firſt General Deputation held in London in the ſpring of the year 1780, was the augmentation of County Members. The abolition of Boroughs was another principle almoſt univerſally approved by that Meeting, but thought unfit to be advanced at that time, when the ſubject was new to the bulk of the Kingdom, and prejudices ran much againſt all attempts to improve the Conſtitution; and therefore it was determined to propoſe that principle only which would leaſt ſhock the intereſts, or alarm the fears of conſiderable Bodies of Men: But, towards the concluſion of their Memorial, ſomething in general terms was thrown out on the propriety of a compenſation for extinguiſhed Franchiſes. Afterwards Lord Mahon endeavoured to bring the Second General Deputation, in Spring 1781, to a declaration that might lead to ſome abolition of Boroughs, by leſſening difficulties, but without ſucceſs in that Meeting. A ſimilar attempt was made in May, 1781, by myſelf, in the Yorkſhire Meeting, but with the ſame reſult; and ſoon after repeated in a different mode, but ſtill without ſucceſs. But on the late change of Adminiſtration, what I believe had always been wiſhed by the Yorkſhire Gentlemen, began to appear feaſible; and when I ventured to propoſe to their conſideration the Articles of Reform in the Circular Letter of Nov. 1782, I had the pleaſure to find them generally ap-

proved. But, on that occaſion, I do not recollect any reference to your Lucubrations, I made none myſelf, and I believe they were not mentioned by any other Gentleman at that Meeting. When they agreed to the principle of aboliſhing Boroughs, they found themſelves determined by their Aſſociation to ſpecify the abolition of 50 Boroughs, in order that the number diſfranchiſed might make room for the augmentation of County Members propoſed by their Aſſociation. In theſe general principles of adding to the County Repreſentation, and taking from that of the Boroughs, they certainly agree with Mr. Sinclair: In the detail of Reformation, in purſuance of thoſe principles, it is poſſible they may differ from him in ſome degree. But I am happy that their plan does not require them to enter much into details, but rather to leave them to be diſcuſſed by the wiſdom and juſtice of Parliament. If Mr. Sinclair chuſes, therefore, to mark *the General Conformity* between his plan and that of the Yorkſhire Meeting, either in his title-page, or incidentally in the body of his work, I think it might have good effects elſewhere; but I am confident it would be conſidered by the Gentlemen of Yorkſhire as a very honourable proof of his eſteem and conſideration.

I am, Sir, with great reſpect,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XXV.

Paper XXV.

An Abſtract *from a* Report *of the* Sub-Committee, *prepared for* publication *at the requeſt of the* Committee *of* Aſſociation *of the* County *of* York, *on the* 31*ſt of* October, 1782, *reſpecting the* State *of the* Repreſentation *in* Parliament *for that* County, *the* City *of* York, *and the* Boroughs *within the* County; *communicated with the preceding Letter to* JOHN SINCLAIR, *Eſq;* *the* 3*d of* January, 1783.

Names of Places.	*The Number of Voters.*		*Perſons intitled to vote.*
The City of York	3000		Freemen of the City
Aldborough	64		Perſons paying Scot and Lot
Boroughbridge	74		Perſons reſident in Burgage Tenements
Beverley	1000		Freemen of the Town
Hedon	173	before Crewe's Bill paſſed	Freemen of the Town
	140	ſince	
Kingſton upon Hull	1400	before Crewe's Bill paſſed	Burgeſſes
	1355	ſince	
Knareſborough	100		Perſons poſſeſſed of Burgage Tenements
Malton	340		Perſons paying Scot and Lot
Northallerton	200		Perſons poſſeſſing Burgage Tenements
Pontefract	320		Perſons poſſeſſing Burgage Tenements
Richmond	270		Perſons poſſeſſing Burgage Tenements
Ripon	146		Perſons poſſeſſing Burgage Tenements
Scarborough	44	before Crewe's Bill paſſed	The two Bailiffs, two Coroners, four Chamberlains, and thirty-ſix Capital Burgeſſes
	34	ſince	
Thirſk	50		Perſons poſſeſſing Burgage Tenements
The County of York	16000		Freeholders

Paper XXVI.

* In conſequence of many Acts of Parliament for incloſing Commons and other uncultivated lands in Yorkſhire having paſſed ſince the year 1782, it is thought that the Freeholders of this County are greatly multiplied, and cannot

Paper XXVI.

Letter *from* JOHN SINCLAIR, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I EMBRACE the earlieſt opportunity of acknowledging the honour of your Letter, dated the 3d current, incloſing a very curious State of the Repreſentation of the County of York. I have already received from ſeveral Gentlemen, even from Cornwall, very accurate accounts of about forty Cities and Boroughs. Many others have promiſed me their aſſiſtance. I alſo expect much information from the Conſtitutional Society. In ſhort, I hope to give the fulleſt and moſt accurate information upon the ſubject that has as yet been communicated to the Public.

When you conſider the weight which the County of York has ſo decidedly acquired, ſince it has thought proper to exert itſelf, you will eaſily account for my anxiety to have any Plan I ventured to propoſe countenanced by its approbation; and it gives me particular pleaſure to have it in my power therefore to ſtate the *general conformity* between our political

not be much fewer now than 18000. But taking them to be no more than 16000, the number ſtated in this Abſtract, we ſhall find they exceed in more than a double proportion the number of Voters in the City of York, and in all the Boroughs of the County ſummed up together. A ſimilar diſparity exiſted in the laſt century, and hence the zeal for amending the Repreſentation, which was manifeſted in Yorkſhire during the reign of Charles I. and under the Protectorate. The corruption of Members of Parliament has taken place ſince that period, and it has been employed with the moſt fatal ſucceſs in gaining the Repreſentatives of Boroughs. It has therefore excited in the more enlightened and virtuous Freeholders of this generation, a juſter eſtimate of

ideas

ideas *with reſpect to the County Repreſentation*, and *diſfranchiſement of petty Boroughs*. Any thing that can poſſibly rouſe the people to think ſeriouſly upon the ſubject, muſt be of ſervice; perhaps even a little Tract may have that effect, whoſe general tenor is conformable to the views and principles of the York Meeting, and which has had the merit of rouſing the Dragon of Old Sarum (to make uſe of Lord Surrey's expreſſion) to defend his Golden Fleece from the attacks of innovators.

I have now, Sir, only to expreſs my obligations to you for the honour you have done me in the courſe of our political correſpondence, and beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf, with great reſpect,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient

and very humble ſervant,

JOHN SINCLAIR.

PALL-STREET, WESTMINSTER,
6th Jan. 1783.

P. S. Before I ventured to propoſe my Plan of Reformation, I attempted laſt ſpring to form or collect a body of reſpectable Members of Parliament to conſider with proper deliberation all ſyſtems of that nature, and, if poſſible, to heal our internal diſſentions, ſo that we might be the better enabled to contend with our external enemies. The Papers herewith ſent, which were privately diſtributed among the Members for that purpoſe, you may perhaps have leiſure to glance over.

The

The plan failed, because the independent Gentlemen who supported that oppoſition thought that nothing was neceſſary to ſave the Country, but to make that oppoſition Miniſters. But whoever is in power, cannot be the worſe of ſome ſpur to integrity and exertion.

Paper XXVII.

Letter *from* Sir GEORGE ONESIPHORUS PAUL, Bart. *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

HILL-HOUSE, *near* HAMPTON, *Oct.* 29*th*, 1782.

Sir,

YOUR Letter, dated the 29th of September, I did not receive till the end of this month, owing to my abſence from home. I am extremely ſenſible of the honour done me by your communicating the intentions of the virtuous body of men with whom you act in the County of York.—I will anſwer as fully as I can reſpecting the County of Glouſter.

I have had no opportunity of conſulting the Gentlemen in a body, but from my inquiries of individuals, both before and ſince your Letter, I think I may ſay they have, at *this* time, no inclination to meet on the ſubject you propoſe.—The Whigs of this County feel generally diſappointed with the new Miniſtry in matters of Public Oeconomy; diſ-

ſatisfied

ſatisfied with the effect of their former exertions, I hardly think they are ready to take an active part in the meaſure in queſtion, nor will its being "the wiſh of the Premier," give the leaſt additional inducement.—National Oeconomy, as a point of Finance, and as the bane of Corruption, was the *favourite*, and indeed the *only* object of our former exertions; Colonel Barre's Penſion, and the detaining the Duchy of Lancaſter for ſpecial purpoſes of perſonal favour, we conſider as a perfect renunciation of the *Principles*; and however the reform of a few particular offices may be permitted, the unreformed liſt of great emoluments, and the eagerneſs for the power of diſpoſal, are unequivocal proofs which mere proteſtations will not do away.

However, ſhould I find an inclination to take any ſteps, *after* your intentions as to the *mode* of redreſs are ſpecified and declared, I ſhall not be wanting in endeavour to render them effective (provided ſuch mode be conſiſtent with my opinion.) I ardently *wiſh* to ſee a Reformation in Parliament, provided the means are unexceptionable; but I am inclined to think propoſitions may ariſe from a Meeting of the County of York, which a Meeting of *this* County could not be inclined to ſupport. *Public Oeconomy* differs much, as a *general propoſition*, from *Parliamentary Reform*. The evils of profuſion and corruption are poſitive and indiſputable; no man can deny his aſſent to a propoſition to correct them, conceived in the moſt *general* terms, nor could

any

any means be propoſed tending to that end which would not be undeniably deſerving the ſupport of every diſintereſted man.

Means of eſtabliſhing *Oeconomy* cannot be *dangerous*, cannot alarm, can tend to no *Conſtitutional Innovation*: It is a meaſure calculated for times of national diſtreſs; it is ſtrengthening the exhauſted arm in the hour of danger. No ſooner was a propoſition tending to it ſubmitted to the County of Gloſter, than the determination was *deciſive* to ſupport the County of York, who have ſo properly taken the lead in ſo uſeful a purpoſe. The general term, *Parliamentary Reform*, would, I think, *now* meet a much more doubtful ſupport. If laid before the County, it would depend on the *means* reſorted to: although they ſhould admit the evil, they would certainly heſitate as to the mode of redreſs.

In matters of ſuch very ſerious import, the conſent to the mode of redreſs ſhould be as univerſal as the aſſent to the grievance. The variety of ſchemes which every day brings before the Public, bears but little appearance of ſuch a correſponding unanimity. So far as to what I gueſs to be the ſtate of public opinion here. As an *Individual*, I will add a few words further to explain my *own* principle.—Of frequent Parliaments I have in public, delivered my ſentiments, that they would increaſe the evil, unleſs they were preceded by laws that ſhould effectually root out the expence of Election and Corruption: of courſe this point I muſt think matter of ſubſequent

ſequent conſideration.—As to Equal Repreſentation, it is the ſpirit of the Conſtitution that equal rights ſhould be equally repreſented. But under all the complicated circumſtances of defect, I look on the attempt to bring the principle into practice as infinitely perilous; I therefore ſhall not give my aſſent to the attempt till I am informed of, and am ſatisfied with, the means to be employed.

Of all the plans as yet ſubmitted to the Public eye, not one appears ſatisfactory. I particularly object to ſuch as purpoſe to repeal the Statutes of Henry VI. reſpecting the Qualification of Electors. I cannot think it neceſſary that every man ſhould poſſeſs a Roman privilege, unleſs he alſo poſſeſſes Roman virtue, to direct him in the exerciſe of it.

In regulating Governments, we muſt not reform merely on abſtract propoſitions, but in a compound ratio of what is a right, and what is beneficial. A meaſure may be juſt in principle, which frequently would be hurtful in adoption. Frequent Parliaments, and *Univerſal Franchiſe* to elect, may in the abſtract be Rights of the People; but, in a Free Conſtitution, there is no Right without its correſpondent Duty: That of an Engliſh Elector is to exerciſe his franchiſe with uncorrupt integrity, with unequivocal independency; otherwiſe he exerciſes a Right to the injury of himſelf, as well as of his Fellow-Citizens. When I am certain that the maſs of the People will ſtrictly perform the *Duty*, I will be the firſt to admit them

them to the Right. But is any man ſo bold as to aſſert there now exiſts this univerſal virtue amongſt the People? Shall I ſee a poor and indigent man refuſe the protection of the rich and powerful, at the riſque of his daily ſuſtenance? If not, I am but eſtabliſhing an Ariſtocratic Power, more derogatory to the ſpirit of a Free Parliament than is the Monarchical Influence complained of.

After conſidering this ſubject in all its bearings, and reducing as much whiggiſm to practice as the infernal corruption of the times will admit, I am convinced no man ſhould poſſeſs a franchiſe who has not ſome pretenſions to exerciſe it independent of any other man's opinion; and I think therefore that the Parliaments of 8th and 10th of Henry VI. were led by motives ſtrictly conſonant with the principles of Civil Liberty.—General Franchiſe is not a meaſure that admits of a doubtful experiment; once adopted, there can be no recalling it. In a work of ſuch moment to Poſterity, let us walk firmly; in order to which, we muſt tread deliberately; and, feeling our ground with caution, reſt each ſtep on the Baſis of the Revolution.

I have the honour to be

Your obedient ſervant,

G. ONESIPHORUS PAUL.

Paper XXVIII.

* Since this Letter of Sir G. O. Paul, and that of Sir W. Codrington were ſent to preſs, copies of thoſe Letters of the Editor, to which reſpectively their Letters were anſwers, have been found.

Paper XXVIII.

Letter *from* Sir GEORGE ONESIPHORUS PAUL Bart. *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

HILL-HOUSE, *Dec. 6th*, 1782.

Sir,

YOUR Letter by Expreſs met me at Glouceſter on Monday morning, previous to the Meeting of our Committee, and I am concerned to think you ſhould have taken ſuch extraordinary trouble to obviate my doubts, particularly as the objections ariſing from the general expreſſions of your firſt Letter were already removed by the Specific Propoſitions contained in the Letter from your Committee. So far removed, with reſpect to myſelf, that I undertook the *attempt* of bringing the County to a conſideration of them, and, as the previous ſtep, I ſent a copy of your Letter to each Member of our Committee, requeſting them to deliver their ſentiments thereon, on the 2d of December. This Meeting of the Committee I find Sir Wm. Codrington has repreſented to you as a General Meeting of the County, and I fear this miſtake has not only been pro-

found. The ſubject of the Editor's Letters was the Meſſage then recently received by him from the Earl of Shelburn, announcing his intention to ſupport the principles of Reform adopted by the Yorkſhire Aſſociation. As thoſe Letters of the Editor do not materially differ from the Letters which were addreſſed by him to David Hartley, Eſq; the Earl of Surrey, and many other Perſons, and which have been already printed in this Collection, it ſeems unneceſſary to produce them here. See Vol. III. pages 344, 345, &c.

ductive of a falſe concluſion, but of conſiderable inconvenience to you. Had the caſe been as you ſuppoſe, the County in general would have profited by your very ſatisfactory Letter; as it is, I could only impart it to the Gentlemen of the Committee, who immediately entered a reſolution of thanks to you for your zealous attention to, and candid diſcuſſion of, the ſubject under conſideration.

I am ſorry I muſt now proceed to tell you the meaſure for Parliamentary Reform will meet with little effective encouragement from the County. The friends of former meaſures, (the Whigs) are ſo lukewarm, or rather ſo apprehenſive, we dare not venture on their equivocal ſupport to meet the queſtion at a General Meeting.

In this County, the Public ſenſe on Political Queſtions can ſcarcely be taken pure and unmixed with the influence of provincial parties, therefore our deciſions are not ſo important as you are pleaſed to conſider them, or, as from the population and *real* conſequence of the County, they ought to be.

Two great intereſts, oppoſed from generation to generation, have almoſt equally divided the County into oppoſite factions. It is next to impoſſible to obtain unanimous concurrence on any political truth, however obvious to ſenſe and reaſon. On the late Petition, the moſt that could be expected was done; we had the active ſupport of the one, and the ſilent aquieſcence of the other. *Great active exertion* it is difficult to obtain from even one party,

party, on any propoſition that does not contain in it a provincial intereſt. Our zeal exhauſts itſelf in the County cauſe, and leaves us cold to more Public queſtions. Accuſtomed to conſider National politics as involved in County intereſts, diſappointment in the one is deciſive to the other. Since our Meetings on the Petition, the Whigs have felt a check to their expectations at home, which, added to a total diſappointment in the new Miniſtry, in matters of Public Oeconomy, may account for much of our preſent torpor. Why thoſe Gentlemen ſhould heſitate to proceed who (as Members of the Committee) have already taken ſteps towards the attainment of the object, may appear to you problematic. To account for it, I have only to obſerve, that the late publications of the Conſtitutional Society, of Major Cartwright, Mr. Sharpe, and others, together with the report of the former Weſtminſter Committee (all tending to means alarming to the Eſtabliſhed Government): Theſe, I ſay, having been carefully diſtributed through the County, have alarmed many, and cauſed them to ſhrink from their former zeal.

In a former Letter I took the liberty of expreſſing my own individual objections: they had chiefly reference to the violent opinions of thoſe Enthuſiaſts who ſoar into ſpeculations inconſiſtent with the advanced and corrupt ſtate of Society. Your laſt Letters are ſatisfactory as to that point: I perceive, with vanity, that my principles are not oppoſed to

your's, and that our opinions on the means are but different ſhades of faith as to the practicability. The violent men of whom I complain as having loſt us the active ſupport even of our *Friends* in the County, will, for the ſame reaſon, hurt you in Parliament, where it is of more conſequence. Their language is *indeed* alarming, and will cauſe men to heſitate, leſt, by too generally acknowledging the Principle of Reform, they ſhould be preſumed encouragers of means tenfold worſe than the grievance; means which, under the idea of recurring to firſt principles, (not at all applicable inp reſent circumſtances) overlook conſequences the moſt ſerious that can affect an eſtabliſhed Government.

When an author aſſerts, "that no legal Parliament has ſat ſince Henry VI." does he conſider the concluſions of his reaſoning?

The credit of the National Funds exiſts on no other authority than Acts of ſuch Parliaments; the whole body of National Juſtice become acts of violence and murder; every ſpecies of property, and every connection of the State diſſolved.—All reaſoning from principles, brought from the darker ages of our Parliamentary Hiſtory, is equivocal, unleſs we thoroughly embrace the ſpirit of the times. Fortunately for the mere point in queſtion, we live, under a compact poſterior to ages of doubt; our Government bears its date from times in which hiſtory is critically exact in all its circumſtances; the compact of the Revolution betwixt the Sovereign Power and the People,

People, is *original* to us; by the Bill of Rights, Elections ſhould be free, and Parliaments ought "*to be frequently held.*" (The latter indefinite expreſſion ſeems to be explained by the Triennial Act of the ſubſequent Parliament.) Your propoſitions are, on this ground, unanſwerable as to principle, though their efficacy may be matter of opinion. I am glad to obſerve you in ſome meaſure accede to my doubts as to circumſtances which ſhould precede Short Parliaments.

The increaſe of County Members may be a good meaſure, if you can clear the difficulties which attend it. The number of the Houſe, fixed at the Union, ought not to be altered. Fifty Boroughs, therefore, *muſt* be aboliſhed to make way for this improvement, and who ſhall fix the doom of the preciſe fifty?

I obſerve that, *from motives of policy*, you would overlook the Burgage Tenures, and reſt on Boroughs more open, tho' indeed perhaps more injurious. But, conſcious as we all are of their criminality, you will find the Houſe averſe to puniſh on the *reputation* of ill, without evidence of *recent fact*; there is a difficulty in fixing any general rule which ſhall embrace the exact number to be included in this proſcription, and yet ſuch is neceſſary to avoid *apparent* or *real* partiality. But, ſurely, I need not heſitate to aſſert, as a ſelf-evident *axiom* of the Conſtitution, that ruined caſtles and empty houſes are not objects of

Repreſentation in Parliament, or that no man ought to poſſeſs a Seat in an Elective Aſſembly as a Right in Fee appurtenant to an Eſtate: ſuch Rights appear *null à priori*; and as moſt of the Seats which fall within this deſcription have been acquired by purchaſe, it is the leaſt puniſhment due to ſuch unnatural property, to inſiſt on a further alienation, and ſay they ſhould all be given up for a price to be paid.

I ſhould be wandering into too refined a ſpeculation on the good effects of Lord Mahon's Bill, were I to imagine it ſo correct as to render a Franchiſe of no poſſible profit to an Elector. But let me for an inſtant ſuppoſe it; and further, that it be propoſed to purchaſe annuities for the benefit of Electors *yielding* up their Franchiſe. Thoſe Boroughs where the Electors are few, (and therefore moſt proper for extinction) would have a high temptation to ſurrender; ſuch ſurrender ſhould be accepted. By ſuch a mode, it is poſſible you might obtain your number by *ceſſion*.

I think I have heard that the Borough of Launceſton has offered to ſurrender ſince the Revenue Officers Bill.

I ſhould add to your purpoſe, that altho' the Friends of Reformation are ſupine in this County, the opponents are not more active in ſupport of their opinion; and as to weight in the Houſe of Commons, if I may venture to calculate from avowed ſentiments, the Friends

to

to moderate propoſitions of Reform are as *five* to *three*. *

I have the honour to be,
With great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient
and humble ſervant,
G. ONESIPHORUS PAUL.

* From motives of delicacy to Sir G. Paul, the Editor would have ſuppreſſed this, and the preceding Letter, though of a Public nature, leſt the appearance of his ſentiments on the County Politics of Gloucesterſhire, however they do honour to his head and his heart, might be to him the occaſion of pain; and in this caſe, the ſuppreſſion of theſe two excellent Letters would have been regretted as a material loſs to this Collection. In the Editor's judgment, they are written in the very ſpirit of Manly Independence and Prudent Patriotiſm; and in the ſame ſpirit, their worthy Author has conſented to the publication of theſe Letters, "in which he has found, on peruſal, no opinion or principle which he would at this hour retract."

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NUMBER

NUMBER XXXIV.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* CHAIRMAN *of the* Nottinghamſhire Committee, *to the* CHAIRMAN *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.

KELHAM, *22d Nov.* 1782.

Sir,

THE honour of your Letter came to hand at Belton, on my return from Burleigh. Permit me to aſſure you no time ſhall be loſt in convening a Meeting of the County of Nottingham the firſt opportunity, and laying before them the requeſt of the York Committee towards a free communication of ſentiments with the Nottingham Committee and County.

It gave me great ſatisfaction in obſerving by your Declaration, that, in general terms, the Proceedings and Reſolutions of our late Meeting had met the approbation of the York Committee, and their moderation commended. Still that ſomething more is wanting to obtain a mutual redreſs, our principal object, I readily allow; and this point muſt be aſcertained by a mode to be agreed on, that may tend to unite the

the ſenſe and concurrence of the two Houſes in favour of the Requiſition.

The four Reſolutions ſet down in your Letter will come before the Meeting as matters of great deliberation and conſideration when the diſcuſſion takes place. Their ſentiments and reſolves I ſhall not attempt to anticipate.

But the following concluſion muſt not paſs my notice: The hints ſo ably interſperſed in your obſervations cannot fail throwing a conſiderable light on the next proceedings of the County Meeting, and enable them to clear their way through the many difficulties which, from your own aſſertions, a Reformation will be ever liable to.

The whole tenor of your Letter ſhall be laid before the Gentlemen that compoſe the Committee of this County, and explained to them to the beſt of my abilities.

The time to be ſettled for calling the Meeting will depend on circumſtances, on account of the approaching Meeting of Parliament; but the earlieſt opportunity, and neareſt to the period fixed on by the York Committee, will, I make not the leaſt doubt, be recommended to their Chairman.

With every reſpect, I am Sir,

Your moſt obedient

and humble ſervant,

GEO. SUTTON.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* MAYOR *of* NOTTINGHAM, *to the* CHAIRMAN *of the* YORKSHIRE COMMITTEE.

NOTTINGHAM, 13*th Dec.* 1782.

Sir,

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 1st of November, and to acquaint you, that I did laſt week convene a Common Hall, to take into conſideration the propriety of petitioning the Houſe of Commons reſpecting a Parliamentary Reform: the reſult was, the queſtion was put, whether *then* to proceed, or to poſtpone the further conſideration for two months; and though it was carried by a very ſmall majority to proceed, yet, as the minority (among whom were ſeveral who declared themſelves Friends to the meaſure) withdrew, it was thought adviſable not to proſecute the affair any farther at preſent. When the grand queſtion of War or Peace is decided, it may be proper to revive the ſubject, and I make no doubt ſhall ſo far ſucceed as to obtain a Petition as a *Corporate* Act; but what the ſenſe of the Town *in general* would be, it is not in my power to determine.

I am, with great regard,

Sir,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

JOHN FELLOWS,

Mayor.

Paper III.

Paper III.

Reſolution *communicated by the* PRÆSES *of a* General Meeting *of the* County *of* Stirling, *to the* CHAIRMAN *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.

STIRLING, *31ſt Dec.* 1782.

THE Gentlemen of the County of Stirling having had the Letter and Enclofures tranſmitted to them from the Committee of Aſſociation for the County of York laid before them by the Sheriff, and read, are very ſenſible of the attention of that Committee in ſo freely communicating their idea of ſuch Reformations as appear to them would tend to the benefit and improvement of the Conſtitution, in reſpect to the Repreſentation of the People and the Duration of Parliament; and beg the Preſes of their Meeting will return their thanks to the Gentlemen of the York Committee, and to their Chairman, for the communication; and to aſſure them, the Gentlemen of this County are equally well inclined to ſupport every meaſure that tends to the Public benefit as any County in Great Britain can be.

THO. DUNDAS,
Preſes.

Paper IV.

Paper IV.

Reſolutions *at a* Meeting *of the* Freeholders, Commiſſioners of Supply, *and* other Proprietors of Land *in the* Stewartry *of* Kirkcudbright, *held at* Kirkcudbright *upon the 7th day of January*, 1783, *to conſider the* Heads *of* Two Bills *reſpecting* Freehold Qualifications, *tranſmitted from the* General Meeting *of* Land-holders and Delegates *of* Counties; *communicated by* ALEXANDER GORDON, Eſq; *the* Præſes *of the* Meeting, *to the* CHAIRMAN *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.

It was Reſolved,

1. THAT the Laws reſpecting the Qualifications of Electors of Members to ſerve in Parliament for Scotland, ought to be altered and amended.

2. That creating nominal and fictitious votes is a grievance.

3. That the Draughts of the Bills tranſmitted to the Meeting, do not appear to be an adequate remedy.

4. That a property valued at 50 l. Scots in the Ceſs Books of the County, and paying Taxes accordingly, ought to be a ſufficient qualification.

5. That the property ought to be holden of the Crown.

6. That all perſons now ſtanding on the roll on nominal and fictitious qualifications, ought to be ſtruck off.

7. That

7. That the Meeting approve of that part of one of the Bills, obliging Superiors and Vaſſals to ſell and buy ſuperiorities upon the requiſition of one another.

8. That the former Committee appointed for this County, to meet at Edinburgh with the Committees of the other Counties of Scotland, be continued; and that the Rev. Mr. Muirhead be added to the ſaid Committee.

9. That the Preſes tranſmit a Copy of theſe Reſolutions to the Chairman of the Yorkſhire Committee, and to the Secretary of the General Committee at Edinburgh. And

10. That the Clerk cauſe theſe Reſoluiions be inſert in the Edinburgh and Dumfries news-papers. *

ALEX. GORDON,
Preſes.

* Mr. Gordon's Letter, and that of Sir Thomas Dundas, are omitted, having been intended merely to authenticate the communications from the Meetings at which they reſpectively preſided.

Paper V.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* MAYOR *of* West Looe, *to the* CHAIRMAN *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.

Sir,

I HAVE been honoured with the receipt of your Letter, and have communicated the contents to the Aldermen and Freemen of this Borough, and we are unanimous in our opinion that it would be highly improper to make any alteration in the Conſtitution of this Country, which we have always reſpected as the moſt perfect that any Country was ever bleſt with; and we cannot ſee any reaſon to be alarmed at the preſent Influence of the Crown, when we had an inſtance in the laſt Seſſion of Parliament that the utmoſt exertions of it could not prevent the Miniſtry from being totally overthrown. We apprehend the evils that would attend frequent Elections would much overbalance the advantages that might be derived from them, and therefore cannot approve of Triennial, much leſs of Annual Parliaments.

We ſee no objections to Copyholders, admitted on Fines certain, being allowed to vote as Freeholders: and we are not ſufficiently converſant with the nature of the Boroughs in Scotland to form any judgment of the propriety of the regulations propoſed to be made in them.

Some

Some of the Magiſtrates having been abſent from home, prevented me from collecting the ſentiments of the whole body ſooner, or I ſhould before have acknowledged the receipt of your favour. I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

NATH. HEARLE,

Mayor.

WEST LOOE, *Jan.* 14*th*, 1783.

Paper VI.

Letter *from the* MAYOR *of* Portſmouth, *to the* CHAIRMAN *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.

PORTSMOUTH, 20*th Jan.* 1783.

Sir,

I TAKE the earlieſt opportunity of acquainting you, that, in conſequence of the Letter with which you favoured me, a Meeting of the Corporation of Portſmouth was holden this day, when the following Reſolution was agreed to unanimouſly:

Reſolved,

That the Corporation of Portſmouth is equally ſenſible with the Committee of the County of York of the neceſſity of a Reform in the preſent defective State of the Houſe of Commons; and that ſhortening the Duration

tion of Parliaments, and introducing a more Equal Repreſentation of the People, appear the only means of rendering ſuch Reformation effectual. I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

JOHN CARTER,
Mayor.

Paper VII.

Abſtract *of* Anſwers *by the* SHERIFFS, &c. *of ſeveral* Counties, *the* City *of* Norwich, *and the* Towns *of* Liverpool *and* Doncaſter, *to the* Circular Letter *of the 1ſt of November*, 1782.

1. THE Letter of Will. Law, Eſq; Sheriff Depute of Haddingtonſhire, dated Nov. 23, 1782, declares, He will lay the Circular Letter of Nov. 1, 1782, communicating the Proceedings of the Committee of Aſſociation of the County of York, before the Gentlemen of the County of Haddington.

2, 3. The Letter of Rob. Campbell, Eſq; Sheriff of Argyleſhire, dated Nov. 28, 1782, and the Letter of Robert Sinclair, Eſq; Sheriff of Lanarkſhire, dated Dec. 6, 1782, make a ſimilar declaration.

4. The Letter of Matt. Campbell, Eſq; Sheriff of Wigtonſhire, dated Dec. 13, 1782, declares, that he ſummoned the Freeholders of that County to take the Circular Letter into

into their conſideration, when nobody attended.

5. The Letter of E. Rolfe, Eſq; Chairman of the late Committee of Norfolk, dated Nov. 27, 1782, declares, that in the opinion of the Norfolk Gentlemen whom he had conſulted upon the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation, a County Meeting was unadviſable; but that they continued adverſe, nevertheleſs, to the undue influence of the Servants of the Crown.

6. The Letter of Geo. Jennings, Eſq; Chairman of the Committee of Hertfordſhire, dated Dec. 13, 1782, declares, that he ſees no great probability that the County of Hertford will interfere in ſupport of the buſineſs recommended by the County of York.

7. The Letter of Viſcount Courtenay, Chairman of the Committee of Devonſhire, dated Dec. 16th, 1782, declares, that the Committee of Devonſhire had been adjourned, *ſine die*, ſubject to a Call of the Chairman on the application of three Members, and that, if he ſhould be ſo authorized, he would call the Committee accordingly, and lay before them the Circular Letter of the Yorkſhire Committee.

8. The Letter of E. De Hague, Eſq; Town Clerk of Norwich, dated Dec. 16, 1782, declares, that the Mayor had cauſed an Aſſembly of the Corporation to be ſummoned to take the Circular Letter into their conſideration, when a ſufficient number of Members did not attend to conſtitute an Aſſembly.

9. The Letter of Geo. Caſe, Eſq; Mayor of Liverpool, dated Nov. 25th, 1782, declares, that he will lay the Circular Letter before the Corporation.

10. The Letter of George Hallifax, Eſq; Deputy Mayor of Doncaſter, dated Dec. 5th, 1782, declares, that he gave notice of a Meeting of the Corporation on that day, to conſider the Circular Letter; when, although a ſufficient number of the Members of the Corporation did not attend to make a Corporation-Meeting, yet ſeveral very reſpectable Members did attend, and unanimouſly deſired him to ſignify to the Yorkſhire Committee their approbation of the propoſitions of Reform in the ſaid Letter, and their ſincere wiſh that a Reform of Parliament may be effected accordingly.*

* The anſwers thus abſtracted, with thoſe contained in the preceding Papers of this Number, and in Number 10, complete the body of anſwers received by the Yorkſhire Committee on the ſubject of their Circular Letter of Nov. 1, 1782. And thus the Reader will be better enabled to judge what degree of intereſt had been excited, and what degree of approbation had been obtained throughout the Nation by the Committee, than he could have been if the whole of that Correſpondence had not been laid before him. This, it is hoped, will be thought a ſufficient reaſon for now publiſhing theſe Papers, in addition to thoſe formerly ſelected for Number Ten.

NUMBER XXXV.

Paper I.

Letter *from* ROBERT WALPOLE, Eſq; CHAIRMAN *of a* General Meeting *of the* Inhabitants *of* Bury St. Edmunds, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

AS the Committee of Aſſociation in Yorkſhire, agreeably to the ſenſe of thoſe from whom their authority is derived, have not overlooked the defective and unequal ſtate of Borough-Repreſentation, permit me, in behalf of the Inhabitants of Bury, to tranſmit to you their Petition, as incloſed; by which you will ſee their deſire of local redreſs; and at the ſame time be convinced of their wiſh of General Reform, on the conſtitutional principles of equal and adequate Repreſentation.

You will alſo ſee the opinion expreſſed by the Inhabitants of the injuſtice and deſtructive conſequences which marked the origin, and have accompanied the progreſs of the War againſt America: againſt which War the Aſſociation of your County in ſome of

their earlieſt proceedings gave a ſalutary teſtimony.

I am, with the greateſt reſpect and eſteem,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

ROBERT WALPOLE

Chairman.

BURY, *7th Jan.* 1783.*

Paper II.

* Within eight or nine months immediately preceding the date of this Letter, the Band of Corruption had been diſcomfited, and their Leader had been driven from his poſt of diſhonour; ſome uſeful Reforms had been effected by the Patriotic Miniſter who ſucceeded to power; and on his untimely death, his worthy ſucceſſor, with a generous frankneſs had given the promiſe of his ſupport to the Yorkſhire Committee, by whom it was made known to the Nation. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe favourable circumſtances, and the indignation excited throughout the Country by the proſligacy of the venal Boroughs, at the laſt General Election, one of which had been recently diſfranchiſed † on the fulleſt proof of its guilt; ſtill, about this time, the meaſures of the Yorkſhire Committee ſeemed likely to receive but a ſlender and inadequate ſupport. On the one hand, the Committees of London, Weſtminſter, and Middleſex, ſtood aloof, diſpleaſed that any ſpecific propoſitions of Reform had been brought forward by Yorkſhire, tho' in a mode not contrary to any engagement; while ſome more eager Reformers refuſed their concurrence, diſſatisfied that Yorkſhire ſought not a more extenſive Reform: and on the other hand, numerous Bodies in different parts of the Kingdom forbore to aſk ſo much, or even to aſk any Redreſs: and thus, Yorkſhire ſtood almoſt unſupported between them. Hence, Mr. Pitt found himſelf not yet enabled, by any ſufficient declaration of the People, to attempt the abolition of Fifty Boroughs; and about this time it was underſtood that he had become apprehenſive it would be neceſſary, in his intended Motion, to abandon that principle, and propoſe only the addition of Fifty Members to the Counties. This was the very conſequence which had been predicted in the Editor's Letter to Alderman Croſby. And certainly, for this, blame belonged not to Mr. Pitt, but to thoſe who declined to declare their wiſh for a limited Abolition of Boroughs.

After this period, the proſpect of ſucceſs was conſiderably improved. Yorkſhire found itſelf joined by the Counties of Cornwall and Derby; the Towns of Bury, Portſmouth, Plymouth, Yarmouth,

† Cricklade.

Paper II.

Letter *from an* INHABITANT *of* BURY, *to a* YORKSHIRE GENTLEMAN; *by whom it was communicated to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

BURY, *Jan. 7th*, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I AM perſuaded it muſt afford you pleaſure to find that, ſomething of that generous manly ſpirit which has ſo much diſtinguiſhed the County of York, ſhould in the ſmalleſt degree ſhew itſelf in a Borough like this. You will ſee by the proceedings of our Meeting, incloſed in the cover to Mr. Wyvill, that it was the unanimous opinion of a numerous and very reſpectable Meeting to petition Parliament on a general Reform in the Repreſentation of the People. Thus far we entirely agree with the York Meeting; but we muſt freely acknowledge that we are averſe from having the whole weight of Repreſentation thrown into the Counties. You well expreſs our wiſhes, when you ſay, that the

Yarmouth, Cambridge, Briſtol, and Scarborough, either had joined, or were preparing to do ſo; and the Committee of Middleſex, in a Letter to that of Yorkſhire, § expreſſed their approbation of the Proceedings at the late County Meeting, and their ſatisfaction in believing that they were unanimous with the County of York. However, this appearance of unanimity, and the ſupport of ſeveral Counties and Towns, was not ſufficient to encourage Mr. Pitt, on the 7th of May, 1783, to adopt the ſpecific propoſitions of Yorkſhire. He found it adviſable to offer Reſolutions of far leſs efficacy and extent; and even they were rejected by Parliament.

§ See Number XII. Paper V.

Commons Houſe of Parliament ought to ſpeak the voice of the People; but we think this never can be done unleſs that Houſe embrace the Repreſentatives of all deſcriptions of men: particularly thoſe who are concerned in the Commerce and Manufactures of the Kingdom. It is impoſſible for the large Body of Landed Gentlemen to ſee with the eyes of Tradeſmen; their peculiar habits and modes of life in general prevent it. Indeed, the preſent ruinous War, by giving a dreadful check to Trade, has made the moſt unwilling ſee, by the aſtoniſhing fall in the value of eſtates, how much the landed and commercial intereſts of theſe Kingdoms are blended and connected together. Yet as theſe things may be forgotten, we never hope to ſee the time when large Commercial Manufacturing Towns ſhall loſe their right to ſend Repreſentatives to Parliament, and only have an intereſt with the Counties. On the contrary, whilſt we hope that the little dirty Boroughs may be diſfranchiſed, we earneſtly deſire that the moſt reſpectable of the Boroughs, extending the Right of Election to all the Inhabitants who pay Pariſh Rates, ſhould continue to ſend Repreſentatives, and ſuch Towns as Birmingham, Mancheſter, Sheffield, &c. be added to the number. With reſpect to this Town in particular, the inhabitants of it, by an acturate ſurvey made in the year 1768, amounted to 7135 Perſons; and it appears by the Pariſh Books that the number of the

Male

Male Inhabitants who pay to the Rates are 587: Yet a Corporation under a Charter from King James the Firſt, conſiſting when full of 37 perſons, who are ſelf-elected, have the excluſive Right of ſending two Members to Parliament.

To obtain for the Inhabitants who pay Pariſh Rates an equal Right with the Corporation to vote for the Repreſentatives of the Town of Bury, is the object of our Petition; and as it likewiſe expreſſes a deſire for a General Reform, we hope Mr. Wyvill and the Committee will intereſt themſelves with their Friends in behalf of our Petition. Will you be ſo obliging as to convey to Mr. Wyvill the Letter of our Chairman, with the incloſures, and inform him of the ſtate and circumſtances of this Town, and our deſire that he would ſpeak to his Friends to intereſt them in our favour.—It has been hinted, that the Corporation has received two Letters from Mr. Wyvill, but they kept the matter quite ſnug. Could you procure me copies of thoſe Letters, and acquaint me whether there were any anſwers returned; and if ſo, (which I much doubt) what thoſe anſwers were?

I am, dear Sir,
Your Friend, &c.

Paper III.

Note *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to the* Author *of the preceding* Letter.

MR. WYVILL preſents his compliments to Mr. ——, and requeſts his acceptance of the incloſed Report of the Yorkſhire Committee. The Appendix annexed to the Report contains a copy of the Circular Letter of the Committee of the 1ſt of November, 1781, which certainly was ſent to the Mayor of Bury. It is equally certain that no anſwer has been received from the Mayor, or any other Member of that Corporation. From that Letter Mr. Wyvill truſts it will appear to the ſatisfaction of Mr. —— that the Yorkſhire Committee mean their attack upon the Boroughs to be confined to thoſe little decayed Boroughs which have been ſo properly termed *the rotten part of the Conſtitution.* If Fifty of thoſe obnoxious Boroughs were cut off, the ſound part of the Conſtitution might be reinforced by an equivalent addition of Members to the Counties, the Capital, and ſeveral Great unrepreſented Towns, without increaſing the number of the Houſe of Commons. By that improvement in the State of our Repreſentation, the Conſtitution would probably be rendered more permanently efficacious to ſecure the happineſs of the People, than it has been in any former period. The extenſion of the Right of Repreſentation, where it has been narrowed and monopolized by

by a few Members of a Corporation, as in the very reſpectable Town of Bury, would ſtill add to the improvement. Thoſe Gentlemen, therefore, who promote *a local correction of ſuch Abuſes*, may certainly claſs among their moſt determined Friends, the Advocates for *a General Reformation of Parliament.*

BURTON-HALL, *Jan.* 26, 1783.

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. W. J. TEMPLE, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

IT is a great pleaſure to me to have the preſent opportunity of renewing our correſpondence. I have the ſatisfaction to acquaint you that, on Monday laſt, the 6th of this month, there was a Private Meeting of ſome of the principal Country Gentlemen of this County at Truro, when we concurred in the following ſentiments and wiſhes. *

Conſidering the peculiar circumſtances of this County, to advance but one ſtep is a great point gained; and I make no doubt but that our next Meeting, which is fixed for the 21ſt inſtant, will be much more numerous; it cannot be more reſpectable for property and character. There are many who, though

* Omitted here, becauſe inſerted in Number XI. Paper VII.

they

they declined attending our firſt Meeting, highly approved of it, and engaged to ſign our Reſolutions. Our two County Members, not at preſent in the country, will be at the head of our Liſt, though one of them is ſo deeply intereſted in the Boroughs. The declaration of our ſentiments is not quite ſo pointed and full as I could have wiſhed; and as you will ſee by the Paper on the other ſide, but a ſmall part of what I propoſed; but Gentlemen were afraid of ſpreading the alarm, and of uniting all the Boroughs againſt us. Should we be ſufficiently ſtrong at our next Meeting, we propoſe to draw up a Petition to Parliament, to be preſented by our Members, and intend to copy almoſt verbally that of the County of York. It will be a great pleaſure to me to hear from you as ſoon as poſſible, that I may avail myſelf of any hints you may ſuggeſt; and I deſire to know whether you think it will be neceſſary to copy your explanation of the Yorkſhire Petition, as well as the Petition itſelf.

We were unanimouſly of opinion, that no Public Meeting ſhould be called by the Sheriff, as it would produce nothing but wrangling and confuſion: none are to be admitted among us, but ſuch as think as we do. Every one preſent had a ſigned copy of our Reſolutions, which he was to communicate to his Friends, to be likewiſe ſigned by them; at the ſame time requeſting their attendance at the next Meeting. Whatever may be the conduct of the Boroughs, and thoſe concerned

in

in them, all the principal Gentlemen for character and property in the County ſeem fully determined to petition Parliament for redreſs, and hope to gain in weight what they may poſſibly loſe in numbers.

Of Penryn, which is in my Pariſh, and indeed of all the Boroughs here, you muſt entertain no hopes. It is entirely in the hands of Sir Francis Baſſet *, a forward, preſuming young man, and of too intereſted and narrow a mind to wiſh for improvement of any kind. His adverſaries in the Borough, who are the Magiſtrates, are equally averſe to any alteration. Mean, ignorant People! And ſo unwilling was the Mayor to ſhew your Letter, that it was with the greateſt difficulty I could get a ſight of it. If you think it adviſable, I will move at our next Meeting that our Reſolutions be communicated to you, to be laid before the Yorkſhire Committee.

With increaſed eſteem of you, and your generous and noble views, I am,

Dear Wyvill,

Your affectionate humble ſervant,

W. J. TEMPLE.

Gluviaſ Vicarage,
PENRYN, CORNWALL,
9th of January, 1783.

Reſolutions *alluded to in the preceding* Letter.

1. THAT the preſent Repreſentation of the People in Parliament is notoriouſly inadequate, but more particularly of the Inhabitants of this County, where about twelve hundred

* Now Lord de Dunſtanville!

dred Perſons, who have votes in the different Boroughs, return forty-two Members, whereas the whole County itſelf, containing upwards of twenty-four thouſand Freeholders, ſends only Two.

2. That it appears highly unreaſonable that ſo ſmall a number of Voters, Perſons in general of inferior condition and property, ſhould have ſo diſproportionate a ſhare in the Legiſlature, and ſo undue an Influence in diſpoſing of what is moſt valuable to ſo many Gentlemen of character, information, and fortune.

3. That encouraged by the declarations of Miniſters, who pledge themſelves to procure a more Equal Repreſentation of the People, we think it a duty we owe ourſelves and Country, to uſe every legal and conſtitutional means in our power to ſupport and forward ſo neceſſary and ſalutary a Reform.

4. That our views and ſentiments on this important ſubject be communicated to thoſe Gentlemen, who, we have reaſon to think, will unite with us, and that they be invited to ſign the above Reſolutions.

5. That our next Meeting be held at ———, and that ſuch Gentlemen as ſhall approve or ſign the Reſolutions, be requeſted to give their attendance. *

* To prevent any poſſible inſinuation to the diſadvantage of my excellent Friend, Mr. Temple, now no more, it is thought proper to publiſh theſe Reſolutions with his Letter.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL, *to the* Rev. W. J. TEMPLE.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan.* 20, 1783.

Dear Sir,

ON every public and private account, your communication of the 9th inſtant has given me the higheſt ſatisfaction; and no one can more cordially than myſelf wiſh ſucceſs to your endeavours to engage the County of Cornwall to ſupport the Common Cauſe of Parliamentary Reformation. I have little doubt, indeed, ſo far as the County of Cornwall may be concerned, that you will have ſucceſs equal to your wiſhes, or mine. The numerous Freeholders of that County have much reaſon to complain of the unequal diſtribution of the Election-Franchiſe; to them it is an inſulting ſuperiority, that a few Beggars in their little decayed Boroughs ſhould poſſeſs an importance ſo much beyond their own, in the ſcale of Parliamentary Repreſentation: To the Nation at large this inequality is the groſſeſt inſtance of abuſe; the correction of which is, in a peculiar degree, the great object of the preſent ſtruggle. I truſt therefore you will find yourſelf ſupported by every man of ſpirit and integrity, who either regards the welfare of the Community, or his own importance as a Freeholder of the County of Cornwall.

I therefore

I therefore cannot help expreſſing my regret that you and your Friends do not think of calling a General Meeting of the County. The great Body of the Freeholders muſt be throughly rouzed, to give your meaſures an effectual ſupport. As far as I can judge at this diſtance, I think you not only might have ſafely truſted your propoſal to their good ſenſe, but you would have even gained ſtrength by calling them together, and the inſignificant Members of your venal Boroughs would not have dared to confront you in the preſence of the Corniſh Freeholders. I hazard this ſentiment, with great deference to you and the other Gentlemen of the Country, in the fulneſs and ſincerity of my heart, hoping that, if your plan is not finally fixed, you will re-conſider it in this reſpect; and perhaps, if there are not ſtronger reaſons againſt it, unknown to me, you may, after your ſecond Meeting this day, find yourſelves encouraged to proceed on the more open plan of a County Meeting.

I am happy to find you approve the Petition of the County of York, which with little variation was adopted from that of Kent. The two Reſolutions of the Yorkſhire Meeting, which explain on what ground, and to what extent they wiſh the projected Reformation to proceed, appear to me to be of the greateſt conſequence. They were intended to guard on the one hand againſt any imprudent attempt to carry the Reform of Parliament, under

cover

cover of *the Generality of the Petition*, to an extreme which might be unattainable, or dangerous if it were attained: and on the other hand, to prevent Parliament taking advantage of the total ſilence of the People on the ſubject of Boroughs, and ſtopping ſhort at the mere augmentation of County Members. Since you do me the honour, therefore, to aſk my opinion, I own it is what I moſt ſincerely wiſh, that thoſe Reſolutions may be adopted by the County of Cornwall.

Having explained myſelf ſo freely to you, on this important ſubject, I muſt intreat you and your friends to put a candid conſtruction on the great liberty I have taken.—I congratulate you on the noble part you are acting, and am, cordially,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

Paper VI.

Letter *from* THO. SQUIRE, Eſq; *of* Plymouth, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

PLYMOUTH, 10*th Jan.* 1783.

Sir,

FROM your well-known character, I am encouraged to hope you will pardon the liberty I take in addreſſing you on the preſent occaſion, particularly when I aſſure you I am not

not in the ſmalleſt degree actuated to it from motives of curioſity.

It is in current report, that a Circular Letter from you to our Mayor (on the ſubject of the Repreſentation of the People in Parliament) has been received, and anſwered without conſulting the Freemen, Freeholders, or Inhabitants on the ſubject; and as it is preſumed your Letter was intended for the Public eye, I could wiſh to be informed (if it would not be intruding on your more important concerns) whether or not the report is true, and what kind of anſwer his Worſhip has thought proper to tranſmit you.

I beg leave to add, that it is in contemplation, and I doubt not will take place, to prefer a Petition to Parliament from the Inhabitants of this Town, complaining of the inadequate Repreſentation thereof; and which, from the juſtneſs of its claims, I ſhould hope will entitle it to the ſupport of the Gentlemen of the Yorkſhire Committee.

I have the honour to be,
With great ſincerity,
Sir,
Your moſt obedient
and very humble ſervant,
THOMAS SQUIRE.

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill, *to* Tho. Squire, Esq.

Burton-Hall, *Jan.* 23. 1783.

Sir,

ON receiving your favour of the 10th inſt. I loſt no time to write to York, and inquire of the Clerk of the Yorkſhire Committee whether their Circular Letter of November 1ſt, 1782, had been ſent to the Mayor of Plymouth; and whether any, and what anſwer had been returned.

Mr. Gray informs me that that Circular Letter was ſent to the Mayor of Plymouth, but that he knows of no anſwer having been received, nor have I received any from the Mayor, or any other Member of that Corporation. The Letter in queſtion is incloſed for your inſpection, together with another Letter, dated Dec. 24, 1782, which will explain the reaſons of the Yorkſhire Gentlemen for defering, at the General Meeting on the 19th of December, to *inſtruct* their Members in the terms propoſed by the Circular Letter of November 1ſt.

I am happy to hear, Sir, that the worthy and independent Inhabitants of the Town of Plymouth have it in contemplation to prefer a Petition to Parliament, complaining of the inadequate Repreſentation thereof, although it has evidently been the endeavour of the

Corporation of Plymouth to diſcourage that meaſure. As an Individual, I beg leave to expreſs my hearty wiſh for your ſucceſs, and I am confident your truly Patriotic attempt will have the warm approbation of the Yorkſhire Committee. Local abuſes can only be pointed out, with propriety, by the Places aggrieved; but the ſame zeal for the reſtoration of our Conſtitution which has induced Yorkſhire, and ſo many other reſpectable Counties, &c. to petition Parliament for a *General Reform*, muſt ever determine thoſe Bodies to ſupport the juſt attempts of their Fellow-Citizens in every *particular* Diſtrict, to recover the Right of Reformation, where that ineſtimable privilege has been wreſted from them, and monopolized by a few Members of a Corporation. But ſince the ſucceſs of every attempt to obtain a redreſs of local grievances will, in ſome meaſure, depend upon the weight and influence of the *General Petition* of the Counties, &c. when the independent Inhabitants of Plymouth reſolve to petition Parliament, it would probably have an excellent effect in favour of their *peculiar Reform*, and alſo would add much ſtrength to the *County application*, if they would extend their plan, and point their Petition at once to the redreſs of their particular grievance, and to the *general correction of Unequal Repreſentation* throughout the Kingdom.

I am ſenſible how great a liberty I have taken in thus venturing to ſuggeſt my thoughts on this ſubject to a Gentleman to whom

whom I have not the honour to be known. But if it is an indiſcretion, it proceeds ſolely from my hearty zeal and very anxious wiſh that both your *local*, and our *general redreſs* of Abuſes in the State of our Repreſentation, may be obtained. Intreating your candour to put this conſtruction upon it,

I am, with great reſpect,
Sir,
Your moſt faithful
and obedient ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from* SAMUEL SHORE, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

NORTON-HALL, *Jan.* 16, 1783.

Dear Sir,

BY a Letter received this morning from Derby, I had the pleaſing account that the Juſtices aſſembled at the Quarter Seſſions there had agreed to call a County Meeting, to conſider of a Petition for a more Equal Repreſentation, and had diſpatched an advertiſement to London for that purpoſe laſt Tueſday or Wedneſday evening. Mr. Mundy was the Mover of it, and has managed the buſineſs exceedingly well.—I could not omit to communicate this important intelligence to you by the earlieſt opportunity.

The plan will be to avoid every queſtion except the main one of a more Equal Repreſentation, and to petition generally for that. Should any thing occur to you that may be uſeful on this occaſion, I ſhall be obliged to you to impart it.

Mr. Wilkinſon, ſome other Gentlemen, and myſelf, have lately been much engaged with our Petition. We meet with good ſucceſs, and hope to get through with it this week, or the beginning of the next.

I have only time to add that I am, with the greateſt truth and regard,

Dear Sir,

Ever your's,

SAMUEL SHORE.

Paper IX.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL SHORE, Eſq.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan. 24th*, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I Congratulate you on the improved aſpect of our affairs. Derbyſhire is, on ſeveral accounts, a moſt important addition to our ſtrength; and I am glad to hear that Mr. Mundy was the Propoſer of a County Meeting; that he means to avoid every queſtion of Reform except the main one of *a more Equal Repreſentation*, and to offer a General Petition on

on that ſubject. There is much prudence in that Plan; and it is to be hoped it will conciliate the worthy and powerful Family of Cavendiſh. On their account, I ſee plainly it would be improper to preſs the Derbyſhire Gentlemen to accede to our Declaratory Reſolution; but I hope the appointment of a Committee to ſupport the Petition is not likely to be much objected to. This, I would venture to ſuggeſt, as a meaſure of the utmoſt conſequence, to give weight and efficacy to the application of the County. If the ſuggeſtion ſhould be approved by Mr. Mundy, as I hope it may be, becauſe I truſt it will be corroborated by your opinion, there will be ſome addreſs required, I ſhould apprehend, to carry the appointment of a Committee, with power to correſpond and co-operate with other Committees, for the attainment of the great object of the Petition. But ſince the whole ſucceſs of the preſent popular attempt to reform Parliamentary Abuſes muſt depend on the People uniting as much as poſſible, and ſhewing a firm reſolution to give to their Petitions a ſteady and continued ſupport, I am confident you will agree with me in thinking too much attention cannot be employed to carry the appointment of a Committee with proper powers for thoſe neceſſary purpoſes. And the appointment of a Committee by Derbyſhire is of the greater conſequence on this occaſion, becauſe the County of Flint has ſo lately thought fit to diſſolve their active and

reſpectable Committee at the moment when a Petition was adopted by the County: an example I ſhould be ſorry to find followed by any other Public Body of Men.

If this Letter ſhould be ſeen by any of your Friends in the County of Derby, I would entreat them to put a favourable conſtruction on what I have ſaid, and to impute the liberty I have taken in recommending ſo earneſtly the appointment of a Commitee, to the ſame zeal for the Common Cauſe which has called them forth; and to my unwillingneſs to withhold my ſentiments, when you have done me the honour to aſk them on a ſubject of ſo much importance to the Public.

I am happy to aſſure you that ſignatures to the Petition in this part of Yorkſhire are more numerous than they were to that on the ſubject of Public Oeconomy. And I have Letters from Cornwall, Plymouth, and Briſtol, which mention their preparing to join in the application to Parliament.*

Believe me ever, Dear Sir,

Moſt cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

* Reſpecting Briſtol, the hopes formed by the Editor of the concurrence of that City were diſappointed; but, whence the diſappointment aroſe, he cannot explain.

Paper X.

Paper X.

Letter *from* B. Z. Esq; *of* Cambridge, *to the* Rev. C. Wyvill.

Sir,

HAVING always been an admirer of the zeal and firmness with which the Yorkshire Committee have stood forth in the noble Cause of Liberty, and of the unwearied pains which you, Sir, as Chairman of that respectable Body are constantly taking to promote the same important end, my indignation is raised to find that your endeavours are by any person, especially by any in a Public character, thought unworthy the least notice. But as two instances of this have fallen under my own observation, I cannot forbear acquainting you with them. *

Thus much, Sir, I have thought myself bound to say to you, that your future communications may not be thrown away on one who is so very unworthy of them. But notwithstanding this, go on, Sir, in the Cause you have undertaken, with the same prudent and fervent spirit that hath hitherto marked your conduct.—Opposition you must indeed expect to meet with. But what of that? "The Wise and Prudent conquer difficulties

* The Mayor of Cambridge, sympathizing with the inferior Boroughs, endeavoured, by neglect of the Circular Letter, &c. of the Yorkshire Committee, to discourage their attempt. Similar instances of neglect have been already produced, and therefore it is thought unnecessary to insert another specimen of it here.

by daring to attempt them." And while you, Sir, and the truly reſpectable Society with which you are engaged, have the ſatisfaction of knowing that you act from motives the moſt pure and diſintereſted, and only wiſh "by *a Reſtoration of the Conſtitution* to place the Liberty of Britain once more on a ſolid and ſecure foundation," you will riſe ſuperior to every ſly inſinuation and open attack, as though you were actuated by a ſpirit of Republicaniſm.

Excuſe the free language I have uſed in this Letter, and believe me to be,

With the higheſt eſteem,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

B. Z.

Paper XI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL, *to the* Writer *of the* preceding Letter.

BURTON-HALL, *near* BEDALE, *Sept. 18, 1783.*

Sir,

I RECEIVED your favour of the 7th of February at Coltſworth, in a ſituation of much diſtreſs, from the dangerous ſickneſs of a very near Relation. At that time, and for ſome months after it, my mind was too much filled with apprehenſions of the great loſs which

which I have ſince ſuſtained, to admit that attention and punctuality in matters relating to the great buſineſs of the Public, which I ever wiſh to be a part of my character. On this account, I deferred anſwering many Letters, to which an immediate reply did not ſeem neceſſary. And for this reaſon, I truſt you will pardon my delay to return my very ſincere acknowledgments to you for your obliging Letter, communicating two inſtances of your Chief Magiſtrate's inattention to the Public Cauſe, expreſſing your own approbation of my conduct, and exhorting me, notwithſtanding thoſe diſcouraging marks of diſapprobation in others, to perſevere in the attempt TO RESTORE THE CONSTITUTION.

I am aware that no man, however pure his views may be, or however cautious his conduct, can ſtand forward in any undertaking to reform Public Abuſes, without experiencing not only neglect and inattention in many inſtances; but alſo ill-will and injurious treatment: his character and conduct will be frequently miſunderſtood, and perhaps more frequently injured by wilful miſrepreſentation. This is the common fate of all who embark in buſineſs of this kind; and of ſuch mortifications I have had my ſhare. But, believe me, Sir, I feel with much greater ſenſibility thoſe marks of approbation and candid conſtruction of my conduct which I have received from Gentlemen who, like yourſelf, have manifeſted a Public Spirit, and a virtuous zeal for

for the Conſtitution. I value their eſteem and regard very highly, and place it in my eſtimation next to the conſciouſneſs of meaning well to the Community. If theſe ſentiments are approved by you, I truſt I ſhall not ſwerve from them, nor from the zealous proſecution of the Cauſe of Parliamentary Reformation, *by every legal effort*, ſo long as there may appear to be any probability of ſucceſs, or any proſpect of Public Good reſulting from the ſtruggle.

I have the ſatisfaction to aſſure you, that the Yorkſhire Gentlemen are not at all diſpirited by the repulſe on the 7th of May: that defeat was foreſeen and expected by them; but, in their opinion, the Public Cauſe ſtands in a more advantageous poſture, and is now more likely to ſucceed than it has yet been. It has met with ſupport, in this early ſtage of the buſineſs, much beyond what they durſt have flattered themſelves with at the commencement of this undertaking. It is ſome proof of their unabated ſpirit, that I have juſt received a Requiſition, ſigned by eight Members of the Yorkſhire Committee, to call a Meeting of that Body; and accordingly an advertiſement, for their meeting on the 1ſt of October, went laſt night to the York and London Papers. But as an earlier and more extenſive communication of this intelligence, than can be effected by theſe means, would be uſeful to the Cauſe, might I trouble you to throw the information into the ſhape of a paragraph,

paragraph, and to procure its inſertion in the Cambridge News-papers?

With the ſame view, I have incloſed a copy of my correſpondence with the Chairman of the Stirling Committee, and alſo ſome paragraphs which have appeared in the York Prints; hoping, if you approve thoſe Papers, you may be able to get them alſo publiſhed at Cambridge; where a Plan of Reformation, leſs extenſive than what has been propoſed by Quintuple Meetings, may poſſibly conciliate ſome of thoſe perſons who are adverſe to any change, from the mere apprehenſion of having *too much Reformation*.

And if intelligence reſpecting Parliamentary Reformation is readily admitted by the Printers at Cambridge, it might have good effects if ſomething were ſaid on the ſubject of the Iriſh Meetings; of *that* particularly which is intended to be held at Dungannon on the 8th inſtant; by which Meeting meaſures for a ſubſtantial Redreſs of Abuſes in their Repreſentation will be adopted, and moſt probably will be carried with complete ſucceſs.

Similar Meetings are alſo preparing to be held in Scotland.—At Edinburgh, I underſtand, a General Meeting of Delegates from moſt of the Scotch Counties is propoſed in this month; from which an application to Parliament will probably be made for the Abolition of their *Fictitious Votes*; and alſo, *as I have good reaſon to hope*, for the reinforcement

ment of the ſound part of our Repreſenta-tion, by adding Members to the Counties and the Metropolis. I heartily wiſh ſucceſs to both the Scotch and Iriſh; but I hope *We* ſhall not ſuffer ourſelves to be outdone by them, *in any legal exertions*, to recover our Rights, and ſave the Conſtitution.

I am now, Sir, giving you a great deal of trouble, but conſidering you as one of the firmeſt Friends to the Cauſe of Reformation, I take this liberty without heſitation, and without apology. Succeſs can only be expected from mutual communication, and the general publication of whatever tends, in any degree, to animate our Friends, and to intereſt the Public. I am,

Sir,

With great reſpect,

Your moſt obliged

and obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XII.

Paper XII.

Letter *from* WILLIAM MIDDLETON, Eſq; Chairman *of the* County *of* Suffolk, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

THE County of Suffolk being ſummoned by the High Sheriff to conſider of a Parliamentary Reform, the Meeting did me the honour of calling me to the Chair. In that capacity I beg leave to inform you that the County have agreed to petition the Houſe of Commons, praying that Honourable Houſe to take into their moſt ſerious conſideration the preſent inadequate ſtate of the Repreſentation of the People, and to apply ſuch remedy as to them may ſeem meet. The Meeting likewiſe appointed a Committee to correſpond and aſſociate with other Counties and Public Bodies who have adopted a ſimilar meaſure, that the Friends of the Reform may act in concert with each other, and communicate any intelligence of conſequence, which would either promote or render effectual ſo ſalutary a regulation.

Give me leave to take this opportunity of expreſſing my ſatisfaction at the great number of extenſive, opulent, and populous Counties, and other independent Public Bodies that have followed the example of the County of York in petitioning for a Reform; and I have no reaſon in the leaſt to doubt but the

Inhabitants

Inhabitants of this County will concur with you and the Gentlemen of Yorkſhire in every peaceable and conſtitutional meaſure to regain a more adequate and leſs vitiated Repreſentation of the People.

I have the honour to ſubſcribe myſelf

Your obedient humble ſervant,

WILLIAM MIDDLETON.

CROWFIELD,
April 23d, 1783.

Paper XIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL SHORE, Eſq.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, *June 27th*, 1783.

Dear Sir,

THE buſineſs of Reformation has taken that turn which, in the Letter to Alderman Croſby, I ventured to predict would be the conſequence of General Petitions, unaccompanied by any ſpecific propoſitions from the People, viz. that a Plan would be brought forward in Parliament much inferior to that recommended in the Circular Letter of the Yorkſhire Committee of the 31ſt of October, 1782. If, according to their propoſal, inſtructions had been adopted by the Petitioning Bodies, the propoſitions of Mr. Pitt might have been thought inadequate to thoſe expectations which in that caſe it would have been reaſonable to form. But when no ſpecific mode

mode of Reformation had been ſuggeſted to Parliament by the People, I ſee not what the Honourable Member could do with greater prudence, than take that principle as the baſis of his ſyſtem, which was at once the leaſt offenſive to Parliament, and the beſt ſupported by declarations of the Popular Meetings.

The improvement of the Repreſentation, by reinforcing the ſound parts of the Conſtitution, is certainly the leaſt exceptionable meaſure that could have been offered. It leads to no change that can juſtly alarm the Proprietors of Boroughs; it leaves the fabric of the Houſe of Commons untouched; and only purpoſes to correct the faults and inequalities of Repreſentation by the ſimple addition of Members. That propoſition had been generally approved by the Popular Meetings; and Yorkſhire, with ſeveral other conſiderable Diſtricts, had even entered into an Aſſociation for effecting a Melioration of Parliament on that principle. This, therefore, was the ground which an able Advocate for Reformation might be expected to take; and when Mr. Pitt did take it, if he had confined himſelf to that meaſure, without attempting any Diſfranchiſement of Boroughs whatever, yet the Aſſociations ſurely could not have complained of the ſhortneſs and inadequacy of his Plan, becauſe on the ſubject of Repreſentation it had lately been their own propoſal. But a ſtanding Regulation for the judicial Diſfranchiſement of Boroughs having been ſuper-added to it, the Plan is

ſtill

ſtill more worthy of their general approbation. That expedient, I believe, was originally conceived by Mr. Pitt himſelf. Its object is the extirpation of the worſt and moſt dangerous ſpecies of Boroughs, in the beſt and moſt unobjectionable mode, viz. a due conviction of general corruption. In other reſpects that Regulation ſeems happily imagined. It is an objection ſometimes urged againſt the addition of Members, that it would render the Houſe of Commons too numerous for the tranſaction of buſineſs. If there be any validity in this argument, the force of it, whatever it may be, is wholly taken off by Mr. Pitt's collateral propoſition. For a Law puniſhing corrupt Boroughs by Diſfranchiſement, would ſoon reduce the number of the Houſe to its preſent ſtandard. And in thoſe Boroughs which might eſcape the ſentence of Abolition, the terror of it would probably render Elections more pure and incorrupt. Theſe are ſome of the benefits which might be expected from that Regulation; and it has beſide the advantage of being ſupported by the practice of Parliament in two recent caſes of notorious delinquency.

But the Abolition of obnoxious Boroughs by a Legiſlative act, without any judicial proceſs, is a meaſure to which the intereſts and the prejudices of many will ever oppoſe powerful objections. Thoſe objections can only be over-ruled by a very general union of the People, demanding that ſacrifice to the Public welfare. But, on the 7th of May, the majo-

rity

rity of the People had not petitioned for the Reformation of Parliament; and they who had petitioned, could not agree to recommend any ſpecific mode whatever. The Counties and the Capital aimed at ſchemes of Reformation ſo widely different, that there was hardly a probability of their acting in concert again; and the zeal of the Capital for the principle of Univerſal Suffrage, in this reſpect may be deemed to have been a diſadvantage to the cauſe, as it tended to diſcourage thoſe Counties which had hitherto kept aloof, and to deter them from any advance, even on the ſafe ground of the Original Aſſociation. Anxious as I am for a limited Abolition of Boroughs, I cannot overlook theſe difficulties; nor can I deny that Peace itſelf, ſo deſirable, ſo abſolutely neceſſary for this exhauſted Country, is more likely to add new obſtructions to the work of Reformation, than to remove thoſe which I have mentioned. On a due conſideration of theſe circumſtances, I truſt the caution of Mr. Pitt will be approved, and he will be thought to have ſerved the intereſt of the Public better by propoſing what the reſpectable Diviſion on the 7th of May ſhews the Houſe of Commons may be induced to grant, than he would have done by moving a queſtion on which it is highly probable he would have been left in a very inconſiderable and diſgraceful minority, that would have excluded every hope of future ſucceſs. If theſe obſervations ſhould be thought well-founded,

there will remain no plauſible ground of objection to Mr. Pitt's conduct on the 7th of May, but this: It may be ſaid, no ſpecific propoſition of Reform ſhould have been brought forward, but the former motion for a Committee of Inquiry ſhould have been renewed. This Motion undoubtedly would have been more ſatisfactory to the Quintuple Meeting; it was indeed the object of their earneſt recommendation to Mr. Pitt: But I am perſuaded if in compliance with their ſolicitations he had repeated this propoſition, he would have conſulted neither the diſpoſition of Parliament, nor the ſenſe of the Nation at large. The Houſe of Commons, laſt year, had declared expreſſly againſt this queſtion, becauſe it opened a door for the admiſſion of the Duke of Richmond's plan; and from the ſtrong manner in which his Grace's ſyſtem was reprobated on the 7th of May from every ſide of the Houſe, it is evident, the ſame objection to a Committee of Inquiry would have been urged again with redoubled violence. Indeed, after what had paſſed formerly in the Houſe, and more lately in the popular Meetings in London, this Motion hardly could have born any other conſtruction than what had been put upon it laſt year by the enemies of all Reformation; and what was then groundleſs ſurmiſe, would have been now confirmed beyond the poſſibility of doubt. But a Motion tending to introduce the Right of Univerſal Suffrage would have been

as little reliſhed by the Country, as by Parliament itſelf. In common apprehenſion, a total change of the frame of the Houſe of Commons cannot probably be effected by any other means than commotion; and if the Right of Univerſal Suffrage were eſtabliſhed in a Country circumſtanced as this is, it probably would be productive of tumults and other dangerous conſequences. There is every reaſon, therefore, to think the demand for Reformation on that principle would have excited general dread and averſion in the Nation at large. No ſufficient application of the People for the correction of abuſes in the ſtate of our Repreſentation can be expected, unleſs moderate men be convinced that it is not the deſign of the popular Agents, or of their Parliamentary Friends, to puſh Political Reformation to that extreme, by deciding againſt the Plan of Univerſal Suffrage, and propoſing terms of Reformation agreeable to the County Aſſociation. Mr. Pitt may not have ſatisfied the Capital, but he has wiſely aimed to gain the Body of the Nation. By countenancing the Univerſal Scheme, he might have acquired a little tranſient applauſe; but to that vain popularity he muſt have ſacrificed all ſubſtantial Improvement of the Conſtitution; it muſt ſoon have been evident that he had propoſed what there was no hope of obtaining, and then, either his judgment or his ſincerity would have been thought juſtly queſtionable.

Upon the whole, I ſee no good reaſon to change the opinion I have already avowed, that Mr. Pitt, on the 7th of May, brought forward he beſt and moſt extenſive Plan for the Reformation of Parliament, which could then have had any probability of ſucceſs, or any ſufficient ſupport from popular declaration; and if his conduct had been materially different, I am perſuaded the object of our purſuit would have been removed to a greater, perhaps to an impracticable diſtance. Upon theſe grounds I declared to him, on the 7th of May, my firm belief, that his intended Motions would be generally approved by the Yorkſhire Gentlemen; and if they were carried, and the Septennial Bill were repealed, I even ventured to aſſure him that, in my opinion, the diſſolution of the Yorkſhire Committee would probably be the conſequence of that Reformation of Parliament. But ſince Parliament, by rejecting his Plan, has refuſed any redreſs of that great and undeniable grievance complained of by the County of York, and other conſiderable Diſtricts, the refuſal loudly calls upon thoſe Bodies to reiterate their Petitions, and to preſs, with increaſing vigour, for a due correction of that alarming abuſe. If, therefore, in the courſe of this unavoidable ſtruggle, the Yorkſhire Gentlemen ſhall be ſupported by a more general concurrence of their Fellow-Citizens, and terms of greater advantage to the Conſtitution, than thoſe which Parliament has ſo recently rejected ſhall appear to be attainable by

by regular means, in juſtice to themſelves, in juſtice to the Public and to Poſterity, they will not ſtop ſhort at inferior improvements.

But if the Nation ſhould be rouſed to a proper ſenſe of its danger from the groſsly vitiated ſtate of its Repreſentation, ſtill I conceive the County of York ſtands pledged not to proceed beyond the line drawn by its Reſolutions of the 19th of December, 1782. It is of great conſequence that the County ſhould abide by thoſe Reſolutions, and ſhould be underſtood throughout the Kingdom to be determined to do ſo. In the Reſolution particularly alluded to, it was declared, the terms of Reformation there ſpecified would effect a correction of Parliamentary Abuſes, which the County of York *would highly approve*. If thoſe terms were conceded by Parliament, I preſume the County would feel the impropriety of advancing new demands, and conſequently would diſſolve its Committee. I have much miſtaken the ſentiments of the Yorkſhire Gentlemen, if this diſſolution would not ſoon have followed even the eſtabliſhment of the leſs extenſive improvements propoſed on the 7th of May. But afterwards, if the Redreſs of Conſtitutional Grievances granted by Parliament, whatever it might be, were found by experience to be inſufficient, and new and unforeſeen dangers threatened the Public Liberty, the tranſactions of the 19th of December cannot be thought, with any appearance of reaſon, to have precluded the County of York from making ſuch exertions to preſerve and

improve the Conſtitution, as future exigencies may render neceſſary. This appears to me to be the fair conſtruction of the Reſolutions of the 19th of December, reſpecting the conduct to which the County of York may be ſuppoſed to ſtand engaged. Whether I have underſtood the tranſaction rightly or not, the County itſelf, at a proper time, will determine.

As an individual, however, I conceive myſelf bound by my concurrence on that occaſion, when the ſpecified Articles of Reformation ſhall be obtained, to promote the diſſolution of the Committee, and to diſcontinue any farther interpoſition in that mode, for the purpoſe of Parliamentary Reformation. But if, after ſome conſiderable trial of thoſe improvements, their beneficial effects were defeated, and popular Combinations, ſimilar to that we are engaged in, were again become neceſſary for the defence of Public Liberty, I hold myſelf free to ſtand forward once more, in ſupport of the Common Cauſe; and in ſuch circumſtances, I ſhould think it an abſolute duty.

I have now only to aſſure you, as I do with truth and ſincerity, that it would give me the greateſt ſatisfaction to find that the ſentiments here ſo frankly communicated are ſuch as you approve. My opinion of the rectitude of your intentions, and the prudence of your whole conduct in this important buſineſs, has been invariable. I moſt ardently wiſh mine may ever be fortunate enough

enough to be considered with equal approbation by you.

I am, dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

S. Shore, Esq.

Paper XLV.

Letter *from the* EARL *of* SURREY *to* MR. WILLIAM GRAY, Clerk *of the* Committee *of* Association *of the* County *of* York.

London, Sept. 30th 1783.

Sir,

I AM much concerned that it has been utterly out of my power to obey the summons of the Association of the County of York, whose exertions in favour of the Parliamentary Reform are become more neceſſary, leaſt the Enemies of that eſſential Right to the Liberties of the People, ſhould take occaſion to aſſert (in conſequence of the laſt unſucceſsful attempt) we acquieſce in the preſent mutilated ſtate of Repreſentation, which I hope we never will.*

I herewith

* Of this Nobleman it may be truly ſaid that he was an early friend of Political Reformation, and that his zeal has been diſtinguiſhed by that ſteady perſeverance which is here recommended through all the viciſſitudes of the laſt twenty years. He is attached to our limited Monarchy and to the Rights of the People alike, from benignity of temper and rational conviction; and from

I herewith ſend you a liſt, as correct as I could make, of thoſe who voted on Mr. Pitt's Motion. I fear there are one or two names inſerted who ought not to be there; this circumſtance you will attend to, in caſe it is proper to be publiſhed.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient humble ſervant,

SURREY.

P. S. I was much mortified at my arrival in Town this day, to find the liſts which ought to have been ſent to York a week ſince were by miſtake lying at my houſe.

Paper XV.

from the ſame cauſes he has uniformly ſupported Reform on the principles of moderation, and a due reſpect to the Laws. And yet this worthy Nobleman has been proſcribed by a misjudging Court, for the avowal of ſentiments which cannot be renounced without ſubverting the very ground which ſupports the Throne of the Brunſwick Family; and more ſingular ſtill, in the hour of alarm and deluſion he was deſerted by the Nation, though ſuffering for the maintenance of principles without which its rights would be nothing more than precarious conceſſions, or unſubſtantial ſhadows; and the welfare of millions would depend on the uncontrolled caprice of an individual.

By the rules of our Conſtitution, the King is the firſt Magiſtrate of a Free People; and among the proud Prerogatives of his Office, he holds not one but by their will, and for their benefit. He is cloathed, indeed, with majeſtic attributes; and he ought to be ſo, for he repreſents the Majeſty of the Britiſh Nation. But his authority is a *deputed truſt*, not *inherent in him by nature*, but *derived from the appointment of the Nation*, in whom alone reſides underived and undefeaſable Sovereignty. The King, in the language of James the Firſt, is the principal Servant of the State; and if the Princes of the Stuart Line had never attempted *to be more*, they ſtill might have ſwayed the ſceptre of theſe realms, with undiſturbed ſerenity.

This never ſhould have been forgotten by Miniſters; and a worthy Nobleman ought not to have been expoſed by them to reproach and diſgrace for inſiſting on this fundamental principle. On the occaſion alluded to, he held language juſtified by the Conſtitution;

Paper XV.

Letter *from* CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I WAS honoured with the last general resolves of your Committee of Association, (dated the 1st of October) under cover from one of your Members at that time, Sir Charles Turner, a few days before his much to be lamented death: And as I am not a Freeholder of the County of York, I have no other way of expressing my wishes and sentiments on the great subject of your resolves, than by letter.

Had my hopes in that particular not been frustrated by a false tenderness, as I conceive, to the fears and jealousies of some in this

stitution; he spake, as became a Nobleman descended from those Patriotic Barons who, in the age of Magna Charta, willingly extended popular Rights, while they vindicated their own, and set bounds to the Power of that Monarchy which they at once opposed and preserved.

But the delusions excited by panic fear, and long kept up by Ministerial artifice, at last seem to be passing away; and the time probably cannot be far distant, when justice will be done by the Court and by the Public to the character of this Nobleman. His struggles, like those of the Mowbrays before him, have been for Constitutional Freedom: but his has been a more warrantable warfare, and the age he lives in is milder than theirs; and notwithstanding a transient infatuation of the Public, Reason and Justice are now more certain to be heard. He has fought therefore not as they did, with arms in the field, but with pacific weapons, with speeches in the Senate, and in legal Assemblies of the People, with Declarations, Addresses, and County-Associations of the most inoffensive nature. The modes of opposition have been different; the objects for which he contended have been the same, and his peaceful efforts, it may be hoped, will be attended ultimately with equal success.

County,

County, a Committee of Correſpondence (duly limited to confer and propoſe, but not determine without the ſanction of their Conſtituents) might at this important juncture have conveyed the opinion of Suffolk to the great aſſociated Body of the Freeholders of Yorkſhire; and you would have been addreſſed by Mr. Middleton, as Chairman of that Committee, whoſe zeal and conſtancy have entitled him to true reſpect, inſtead of having theſe lines ſubmitted to you by a private individual. Of that Committee, during the ſhort period of its exiſtence, I had the honour to be a member; and was one, who thought that the ſurrender of our truſt in ſo few weeks after receiving it, without calling from our Conſtituents, and preſumptively much againſt their wiſh and intention in our appointment, was neither expedient, nor authorized.—That, however, is paſt, and I only mention it as an apology for the manner in which this paper comes before you; ſince had that Delegation, ſo cautiouſly and juſtly reſtricted, continued now in being, my perſonal addreſs would probably not have been made.

It is difficult to imagine more than three diſtinct outlines of a plan of Reform with regard to the Election of Repreſentatives to ſerve in Parliament: One, by throwing open the votes of the ſmalleſt and moſt dependent Boroughs, and admitting the individuals to vote either with a certain proportion of the adjacent diſtricts, or with the County; and

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to endeavour to counteract the over-balance of power left to the Boroughs not included in the Reform by an addition to the Repreſentatives for Counties and Cities, with ſome expanſion of the Elective Right under new qualifications: Another, to leave the Boroughs exactly as they are, excepting the chance of diſfranchiſement on legal evidence of a corrupt majority in any particular Borough, to be made out to the ſatisfaction of a Committee of Election, or to reſult from ſucceſſive convictions of the individuals in a Court of Law; and truſt the remainder to an attempt of revivifying the Conſtitution by the addition only of County Members: The third, to eſtabliſh equal and general, and of courſe annually-renewed Repreſentation.

The difficulty of drawing the line, as to what Boroughs ſhall ceaſe to hold the excluſive ſuffrage, and what ſhall retain it, very evidently, and I think very ſtrongly preſſes on the firſt plan. The difficulty of drawing a clear and ſatisfactory line to regulate the admiſſion of voters upon any principles that might convince the vaſt non-admitted body that they ought to remain excluded, heavier by much, and to me inſuperable. That the addition of an hundred Members with a partial extenſion of ſuffrage would raiſe the price of Influence upon the Nation, and heighten the reward of Parliamentary proſtitution, rather than ſerve as any tolerable barrier againſt its impreſſion, thoſe, I imagine, will not readily doubt, who reflect on the prodi-

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gious diſproportion that would ſtill be left on the ſide of the Boroughs, and examine the great majorities the Miniſter uſed to carry on queſtions of the higheſt intereſt, though the wiſh and expectation of the people was decidedly againſt him: Or on what has been effected in that Houſe within theſe few days, under two leaders of broken parties unaccountably united by virtue of Miniſterial Coalition, on a Bill which the other Houſe could not contemplate with complacency, but indignantly threw out; the ſpirit of Commerce, Freedom, and Public Faith applauding the Rejection.

It is farther to be conſidered, while this counterpoize would be obviouſly inſufficient againſt the great cauſes of preponderance in any conteſt between popular right and miniſterial management, how far it might operate in ſupport of another influence no leſs foreign to the Inſtitution of a Houſe of Commons: the preſſure of a Landed Ariſtocracy on the Commercial and Trading Part of the Community. In the hands of that Ariſtocracy are already many of the Boroughs: In the ſame hands, many, to which the Plan of ſuch Reform could not extend, would be left; and, with the junction of this new force, we might ſee an order of men whoſe weight, from the nature of their property, is in no danger of being over-powered, ſhould any ſyſtem ſhort of extreme partiality be adopted, aſſume more conſequence than Society could any way endure; and the end would be, the

People's

People's taking refuge under the wing of unmixed Monarchy, reſorting to a tumultuary and ill-ſettled Democracy, or bowing down their necks to a long and hopeleſs ſervitude under Maſters who would revive the memory of the bitterneſs of Feudal Deſpotiſm. But the inefficacy for the end propoſed, and the danger in this alarming point of tendency of throwing weight into the hands of thoſe Families of whom the wiſe and the virtuous are at leaſt fully content with their preſent ſhare, and others are felt too powerful for their Fellow-Citizens, (when not controlled by the evil of Undue Influence operating in another direction) theſe conſequences, with the innovating complexion of the expedient, and its want of conformity to the principles of our Conſtitution, have been explained with ſuch force and perſpicuity by Mr. Batley, that to add clearneſs or ſtrength to his remarks is perhaps impoſſible. I ſhall only farther obſerve on this Plan of Reform, that being complex, circumſcribed, ſuſceptible of boundleſs diverſity of opinions as to its extent and modifications, whether in the number and deſcription of the Boroughs to be retrenched, the quality or quantity of property to be admitted within the pale of Suffrage—and after all, leaving the Repreſentation exceedingly unequal, manifeſtly defective, expoſed to the evident probability at leaſt of a formidable acceſſion of Influence to one quarter, at the price of a precarious and imperfect retrenchment of Influence in another, will be neither ſo readily it

dily comprehended, ſo determinately adjuſted, ſo extenſively popular, or ſo free from new hazard to the Conſtitution, as a Plan of Reform requires to be, in order to inſure ſucceſs, or to make that ſucceſs deciſively and ſafely a bleſſing to the Community.

On the ſecond Plan I have much leſs to ſay; Notwithſtanding the favourable mention of it in the Reſolves, I ſee nothing to recommend it but the ſhadow of an Appearance of greater practicability, and its conſiſting of fewer parts than the juſt-now examined ſcheme of Reform. And the objections to the adding of an Hundred County Members yet more forcibly urge againſt that meaſure when ſtanding alone, as in this ſcheme, than when ſomewhat mitigated in its danger, and improved in what beneficial tendency it may be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs by an extenſion of Suffrage, (how inadequate ſoever) and a retrenchment, imperfect as it would be, of Borough Influence. And conſidered as a counterpoiſe to that unequal weight which now predominates ſo uncontrollably in the Houſe of Commons, leſs cannot be ſaid than that, ſuppoſing the Hundred Knights unanimouſly and immutably attached to the Public Intereſt, (which, conſidering that in their election little or no improvement would be made, is a very large aſſumption) they would feel their efforts utterly inadequate to reſiſt the ſevenfold mightier Column of that Phalanx which would be left unaffected by this attempt at Reform.

As to the Boroughs, waiting for proof of Corruption in the majority, Corruption exerciſed over ſmall numbers, with any degree of reſerve and management, will elude detection; and the detection muſt be more glaring than careleſſneſs or impudence itſelf, forgetting the policy of ſuch Bodies, would admit, oftener perhaps than once or twice in a century, to juſtify, not to ſay extort from the Houſe a ſentence of Diſfranchiſement, or ground that legal demonſtration which a Court of Juſtice muſt have. Nor can it be omitted, that the moſt deciſive and permanent Influence may be poſſeſſed, exerciſed, and transferred over an handful of Electors, without giving or offering a bribe, or interpoſing a menace. Nay, were that handful, in property, unſuſpected purity, inflexible conſtancy, all that can be conſiderable, worthy of confidence and ſecure of independence, the objection were enough, that they are an handful: and that the Liberties of the many, the Rights of the Community, the National Intereſt, Dignity, and Safety ought not to be left to the nomination of a few, and thoſe unauthorized Electors, were they the wiſeſt and beſt of men. It is an inferior evil, but yet not to be overlooked, that the ſcheme now in conſideration increaſes the number of Repreſentatives, and this too without increaſing that of Electors.

One advantage, however, and of great importance, this experiment may have purchaſed. To undeceive the groundleſs expectation

tation of carrying any thing by ſoliciting a very little from Parliament. We ſhall now, it may aſſuredly be concluded, join in the conviction that defective Plans of Reform will not engage the favour of that Aſſembly, by the merit of Moderation! Too ſcanty to intereſt the People, they can offer nothing which the delicate ſenſibility of the Houſe will not dread as too much, and have a thouſand fears of its acceptance with the Community, its conſiſtency with the Conſtitution, its agreement with the end and nature of Repreſentative Privileges, which nothing can ſatisfy but the clear, decided, general voice of the Community. That voice will only be heard when a Reform truly efficacious, comprehenſive of General Freedom, and therefore worthy of its awful interpoſition, ſhall have been duly offered: which ſervice the Committees of the ſeveral Counties, when neglecting the deluſive ſemblance of ſomething imagined practicable for being ſeemingly ſcarce worth oppoſing, they ſhall extend their views to a Reform capable of uniting the Society in its behalf, will be moſt competent to render. This propoſal for ſaving the Boroughs, and augmenting the Houſe of Commons, were it in the leaſt applicable to the redreſs of our Repreſentation in this part of the Iſland, it would then be neceſſary to remark how unequal it muſt be to Scotland.

The Third, therefore, though in order of Propoſal and in acknowledged Conſtitutional Principles the Firſt, is that of Major Cartwright,

wright, adopted by the Sub-Committee of Weſtminſter, recommended in the various Tracts of the Conſtitutional Society, and ſubſtantially retained in the Bill lately given to the Public by the Duke of Richmond. This alone has the advantages of ſimplicity, comprehenſion, equality, efficacy, ſelf-ſupporting energy, agreement with the ſpirit of the Conſtitution, with the analogy of Conſtitutional practice, the neceſſary ends of the ſocial compact, the feelings and the rights of humanity: It is clear and animating as the common light, and with ſimilar eaſe and beneficial diffuſiveneſs would it pervade Society.

Where the experiment has been made, the public voice has declared for it. In this County the Inhabitants at large were convened; the Inhabitants at large, though the majority were Freeholders, aſſembled: The Petition was ſuperſcribed, ſigned, and went to Parliament as the Petition of the County, not of a particular order. General and warm was the approbation of thoſe principles which were then ſubmitted to the Aſſembly (and one ſo numerous few Counties have beheld) of Equal, Univerſal Suffrage, and Annual Parliaments. The Body of Freeholders then preſent ſeemed almoſt to a man to feel the communication of Elective Right as it truly is, not a diminution but an enhancement of the conſtitutional value of their own; an act of juſtice to the Community; no leſs recommended by expedience than dictated by the generous impulſe of ho-

neſt ſentiment. The Duke of Richmond's Letter to the High Sheriff of Suſſex received in the full Meeting of that day ample evidence of its principles being conſonant to the feelings of the Public: an evidence which I recollect and repeat with pleaſure, but which the nature of the thing renders ſuperfluous; our very adverſaries admitting that the ſenſe of the Community in its favour muſt neceſſarily reſult from the equality and extent of the plan.

That it would give votes to perſons not poſſeſſing property ſufficient for independence, give me leave to deny; and to ſupport, as deference to a reſpectable Body who have intimated ſuſpicions on this head demands, my opinion by my reaſons. I apprehend that it proceeds from a falſe eſtimate of the nature of political independence, that ſuch notional ſecurity is attached to certain qualifications, and ſuch diſtruſt to the abſence of them. Reflect a moment how very trifling the amount of that property which in the preſent ſtate of Society muſt be admitted as a qualification, in every plan that is not more narrow and oppreſſive even than the preſent. What are the pittances which the Yorkſhire plan, and every plan of the ſmalleſt extenſion aſſumes for a teſt of Independence! Pittances indeed, (and paltry, let me be ſuffered to ſay) if property were the true ſecurity; for, in that caſe, our adverſaries are in the right: Forty Shillings a-year is far, very far from adequate;

quate; and what is, would be an endleſs difficulty to adjuſt.—But if rectifying the unequal and narrow exerciſe of Suffrage, and expanding it in that free extent which the influence of Corruption cannot graſp, if limiting the period of delegated truſt ſo as not to leave ſpace for the cabals, or permanency to the eſtabliſhment of Corruptive Power; if theſe be the only rational, the certainly efficacious means of procuring Political Independence, then will the ſpirited Reſolve of the Dunnigore Volunteers be felt in its full force, that thoſe who can ſupport themſelves by honeſt induſtry, though in a low ſtation, are as independent as any order of men whatever. They are ſo eminently, and to a ſuperior degree even now: but when Equal Suffrage, diffuſed through the whole Community, and the annual circulation of the Repreſentative Truſt ſhall have cleared the ſtagnant receſſes of Corruption, and given firm Political Independence to the Nation, then we ſhall not be looking for exemption from dependence in the ſpell of names, or within the circle of obſolete and contracted uſage; in Freeholds at preſent, or in Copyholds of this or that value, or Leaſeholds of certain rent and duration hereafter; but in the incorruptible nature of equal, unreſtricted, Elective Right; in the hopeleſſneſs and futility of an attempt of Annual Repreſentatives by Free and General Election, ſhould a Miniſter be ſilly enough to devote the Treaſury to the project, bribing a

majority of ſo many myriads orderly diſtributed into Diſtricts; and this obvious, ſimple order of diſtribution, together with the excluſion of Bribery, Intrigue, and Influence, would ſhut out Tumult. When Electors ſhould no longer be haraſſed with long journies from home, drawn to places where they have no reſpect of acquaintance, no awe of neighbourhood, no reverence of home, inflamed with exceſs of eating and drinking, irritated by the ſtruggle of doubtful and perplexed qualifications, under no law but that of appetite, force, intereſt, and fear—but regularly convened in their reſpective Pariſhes (if moderate in extent); unbought, becauſe the idea of ſuch a purchaſe would be vain; unbiaſſed, becauſe partial influence could not ſo divide and extend itſelf; uninfluenced, unterrified, habituated to the exerciſe of this ſacred pledge of Freedom, conſequently exempt from the embarraſſment which attends the unfrequent exertion of any power—the order, ſobriety, independence of Elections, would reſt upon immovable foundations.

As it is, and as I fear it would be, if the limited and ſtill unequal plan of Reform were adopted, few comparatively could be thought to give an independent vote, and the protection of the Ballot would ſeem a neceſſary refuge.—From the plan of the Yorkſhire Aſſociation, I muſt own my inability to ſee how that protection could ſafely be ſpared. On the mode and circumſtances one may juſtly

ſpeak with leſs decided opinion, than on the eſſence and extent of a Plan of Reform. I therefore mention Ballot only incidentally: I have my notion that it might be ſafely, and, if ſo, advantageouſly ſpared in caſe of a complete Reform, though the opinion of a man of ſuch clear and comprehenſive views as Major Cartwright deſerves to be well conſidered before its rejection were poſitively pronounced, at leaſt by my private voice. However ſtrongly inclined to think the exerciſe of Equal and Univerſal Elective Right, with ſeſſionally choſen, independent Parliaments, might ſtand boldly, and on ground impregnable without it, I cannot ſo think of Plans obviouſly liable to Influence, and that Influence often in one Perſon, often extending to ſeveral Boroughs and different Counties upon the Plan of Partial Reform; not only the influence of Property, or of Family, but his Perſonal influence and preſence as an Elector. That plan which gives to every man his vote, and to none a multiplicity of votes, would prevent this dangerous exertion of a power which infringes on the idea of ſimple, equal, protective, repreſentative Right.

I would not miſpend time in dwelling on the confutation of thoſe ſurmiſes which ſuggeſt danger to the equipoize of conſtitutional powers, by ſuch added ſtrength to the popular branch of the Legiſlature. With relation to hiſtorical inference, it has been entirely miſapplied; it was not the effect of popular

principles, but the breach of them in the Houſe of Commons, by giving themſelves an arbitrary duration, that ſubſtituted to Regal Tyranny, Anarchy, through the medium of an Oligarchy. Detached from their dependence on the People, and too readily improving on the apparent neceſſity of the criſis, they aſſumed new and dangerous powers, derogatory to the only true political ſupremacy of the People. Great part of thoſe abuſes, which Dr. Jebb, with the firmneſs of his character has marked and reprobated, impriſoning for breach of ſelf-determined, undefined, incognizable, and illimitable privileges; the ſequeſtering of perſons thus impriſoned from all protection of Law; the deciding excluſively on conteſted Elections; the excluſion of their Conſtituents from the place of their Aſſembly; the arrogating of power to impoſe on a Delegate to that Aſſembly, ſent thither by the Electors of a County, (and if one, any number might be deprived of the repreſentative character) to impoſe the incapacity of being elected, and annul the voice of as many Counties as they ſhould ſee good by their ſingle vote—the repeated attempts to ſtop the very publication of their Debates—Theſe abuſes many of them originated at the æra when it is miſtakenly ſaid the Democracy had devoured the Conſtitution. The want of a due portion of democratical power rendered thoſe memorable ſtruggles ſo calamitous and unavailing for

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Public Good. A real Repreſentative Body, ſeſſionally elected, will be defenſive of the Liberty of its Conſtituents; it will neither have time nor the temptation to make ſelfiſh inroads on the conſtitutional diſtinct privileges of the other branches of the State. Imperfectly and unequally elected, a Repreſentative Body will be the ſeat of Faction, or of Influence; to every thing it will tend, but the true object. Should it even purſue this, which the Parliament of Charles the Firſt, and afterwards of the Interregnum (for a general Commonwealth it never was) ſeem generally to have wiſhed to do, it cannot be regularly or effectually. There was Wiſdom, Virtue, Intrepidity, in that ill-fated Parliament; as much perhaps, or more than will be again found in an Houſe of Commons once fatally ſevered from its due connection with its Conſtituents. Yet an Oligarchy it was; and ſoon beheld Cromwell trampling on its ruins; for it wanted the root of juſt and ſolid power, Public Confidence founded in National Appointment, renewed by frequent and ſtated Delegation. The Houſe of Commons cannot be too extenſively what its name imports, the Houſe of the Repreſentatives of the Commonalty, ſo fairly and fully delegated as to be conſidered (within the limits of its truſt) the very Commonalty itſelf. If ſhort of this, except that the Terms of the Conſtitution may preſerve the diſguized veſtiges of its eſſential Rights, the very exiſtence of an Houſe

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of Commons, nominally ſuch, is no object to the People; and on the other parts of the Legiſlature, it will by fits encroach, and be ſervile in its dependence. With an Houſe of Lords it may often claſh, tenacious of an Ariſtocracy of its own. It may ſnatch at the Prerogatives of the Crown one moment, and ſcreen the delinquency of the Miniſters of the Crown the next; it may be tender of reſtraining miniſterial influence; it may be bold in aſſuming the diſtinctive functions of executive Power, depoſited ſeparately from the Legiſlature for the ſecurity of Public Freedom. It may preſent a perpetually varying and undeſcribable ſcene of Submiſſion, Uſurpation, Ferment, Confuſion. It may come to Reſolves aſſertive of the Dignity it ought to have, and raiſing the public expectation of its ſeconding their wiſhes for the removal of Undue Influence. But if it make the ſlighteſt progreſs beyond abſtract declarations of the Neceſſity of Amendment, it will retract its ſteps with precipitation, more ſolicitous for ſafety than the decency of its retreat; and fearing above all imputations the reproach of a delirium ſo foreign to its habits, and ſo deſtructive of the preſent ſtate of its Conſtitution, as the exceſs of Public Virtue.—It cannot be too often repeated, reſtore the Houſe of Commons to the full and equal Conſtituency of the People, and the whole State gains by the reſtitution. It cannot be conciliatory of affection to the Regal part of

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the Conſtitution, to ſee it perverted and diſgraced by Miniſterial agency on that Body which ought to be the uninfluenced Repreſentative of the Commons. It cannot be conducive to the honour of the Houſe of Peers to act co-ordinately with an Aſſembly which is not the Repreſentative of the other part of the State: But, above all, what is Great Britain, if the vaſt majority of her Sons are a name, a ſhadow, a fiction in the Conſtitution! To ſhift Inequalities, to ſoften the deformity of Corruption, to render a mock Repreſentation a leſs glaring inſult, and give it a pretence of wearing the name with a ſhow of decency, ought not, cannot ſatisfy the common ſenſe, and in ſome degree awakened ſpirit of the Nation. It is impoſſible not to join with a Jebb in teſtifying, in concurrence with the ſentiment and voice of other undeviating Citizens, that unleſs enough be done to render the true intereſt of the Country predominant in the Houſe of Commons, nothing is done. This cannot be the reſult of partial Reform; nor do I think there is power to carry any Reform which ſhould leave the regulation and diſtribution of Suffrage a matter of remote and doubtful concern to the great majority of the People; at leaſt, to carry it by peaceful and conſtitutional efforts. Tho' firmly at the ſame time perſuaded, that by an equal and general communication (reſtitution rather) of this neceſſary ſecurity to Freedom, Reform would be obtained, and a pure

Conſtitution

Conſtitution tranſmitted to diſtant ages, without any ſhock to the public tranquillity and order; and indeed as the only probable means of long retaining the appearance of either. Either convulſions, lethargy, and death muſt be, or a general, equal circulation of vital power. This diſeaſe is not partial, nor to partial remedies will it yield. And there is this farther analogy: the diſorder will not be removed by our wiſhing the cauſes of it to change their nature, ſupplicating Corruption to give us Purity, reſting on partial Power for the re-eſtabliſhment of Freedom.

It is granted, that the attempt of Reform propoſed by Mr. Pitt, defective and hazardous, (for reſpect to Truth and the Community extort the declaration) was more (and it muſt be, if it was any thing) than the Houſe would be induced to accept by any internal motives. It is certain loſs of time, and neglect of invaluable opportunity, not to correſpond, aſſociate, and preſent the national ſenſe on a plan ſufficiently ſimple, intereſting and comprehenſive not to divide, or to fail of their attention, or to miſs of the ſupport of the Community. Then let Parliament, when the People ſhall have ſpecifically ſtated and claimed their Rights *, grace themſelves by paſſing the ordinary form on what ſhall have acquired the eſſential validity. Then let them arrange

* See Dr. Jebb's Letters to Lieut. Col. Sharman, and his Addreſs, early in the Diſcuſſion of Reform, to the Freeholders of Middleſex.

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the ſubordinate detail; but let the ſubſtance be fixed by the ſanction of the People, as a Claim of Right, which the Repreſentative Body cannot, without renouncing the name, refuſe to the voice of the General Conſtituent. On Equal and Univerſal Suffrage, you will recollect the Foes of all Reform dread the probability of the People readily agreeing. Union upon contracted, and, of courſe, arbitrary hypotheſes, they with the utmoſt ſecurity and too much reaſon deride. They know experimentally, there is no Union but of Force, Error, or Corruption, that can be made general, unleſs on general principles. From their fears you may not think it ill conduct to regulate your movements, and apply them in that direction where your Enemies feel their weakneſs; where you are certain of ſupport from all the powers of the Community, certain to concentrate the otherwiſe ſcattered rays of Freedom, irreſiſtible when united.

I have been too long, and yet know not how to contract the magnitude of the ſubject into narrower compaſs. I ſhall only add, that as you have nobly called on the People, as they tender their Perſonal Freedom and Honour, the ſafety of the Community, the welfare of future Generations, not to ſink into a ſtate of ſupineneſs and inactivity, a neglect of thoſe legal means by which the Conſtitution may be preſerved, let me intreat you to extend your liberal views to the reception of

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every motive which on due examination you ſhall ſee juſt, by which an immediate ſenſe of individual and collective concern in this great Cauſe can be impreſſed on the whole Community. To this end, every poſſible comprehenſion, every enlargement of your Plan, cannot fail of being powerfully inſtrumental. Nothing but the evidently impracticable, or the ſubverſive of Peace and Order, ought to be an objection to a Plan which has theſe conſiderations to recommend it. Its ſuperior eaſe, and certainty of attainment, the tranquillity of its operation, I have inadequately endeavoured to repreſent. But if no arguments more likely to be regarded from others, actuated by the ſame conviction, can yet evince to your Committee the reaſonableneſs of recommending, or to the great convention of the Freeholders of your County, the neceſſity of adopting this one Plan of Equal and Complete Reform, let me conjure you to think at leaſt of the neareſt approximation. By admitting no farther than all Houſeholders, the ſacrifice of right, and therefore of true expedience, would in my apprehenſion be great; and I deſcend with reluctance, with dread of the event, to this idea of limitation. The comparative ſimplicity and advantage of ſuch a Plan will yet be very conſiderable, oppoſed to the perplexity and inconvenience which will attend the ſettling of vague and inconſiſtent qualifications of Property.——If even this cannot yet make its way to the approbation

probation of your Committee, or of the Aſſembly to be convened, ſomething may be done by reſtoring Freeholders, without reſtriction of value, to that equal Right which before the Statute of Diſfranchiſement they had long claimed and exerciſed; and by bringing Copyholders, who are now within equal reaſon, into equal benefit. If theſe latter would be thought under Influence, where their Fines are arbitrary, let it be propoſed to apply for an Act of Parliament, which ſhall do univerſally and at once what a Court of Equity will do always upon application, as the inſtances ariſe; reduce theſe uncertain to certain Fines; and let it be underſtood that ſuch juſt ſettlement is a part of the General Syſtem of Reform. Leaſeholders (if not otherwiſe qualified) upon terms of ſome conſiderable length would, as in the Reply of the Committee of the Grand Convention in Ireland, have a claim to be comprehended; nor could the ground of refuſing it to Holders of Stock in the Public Funds apparently admit of being eaſily and conſiſtently maintained. In truth, qualifications annexed to Property muſt either be narrower than the narrow principle itſelf, or muſt be carried into a long, intricate, and at laſt imperfect enumeration of particulars; and the adoption or rejection will have no legitimate, rational, or ſettled criterion. Any thing like conſiſtency or comprehenſion of equal caſes within equal rule, will tend ſo nearly and inevitably to the general admiſſion of

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the Commonalty, that it will be ſeen to be infinitely more convenient, ſafe, and juſt, to adopt at once a principle founded in the nature of Man and of Society; and inſtead of diſputing upon ſhillings worth of Freedom, or the fantaſtic merit and independence of this or that denomination of Property, to reſolve all into a rule which will neither puzzle, miſlead, nor divide; the perſonal, equal, and common Right which at leaſt ought to be clearly ſtated to the People, that conceſſions, if reaſon can be found for any, may be the reſult of choice.

In a word, the more equal and general the Intereſt in the Reform, the leſs probability of reſiſtance or oppoſition; the more ſimplicity the greater reaſon to rely on the permanence and regularity of its execution, if attained, and the full reception when propoſed; the more uniformity of rule, (which is indeed ſimplicity in another view) the leſs riſque of evaſion and confuſion. What that riſque is on a partial ſyſtem of arbitrary qualifications, the innumerable frauds and prejudices to the detriment of ſocial intercourſe, Morality and Religion, as well as Freedom, too clearly witneſs; the diſorder, profligacy, and contempt of every tie which characterize the preſent ſtate of connection between Elector and Repreſentative too fatally demonſtrate. Aſk for Public Manners in the ſink of a corrupted Policy, you might as well exact private Virtue and Honour from the worſt ſeminaries of

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every Vice. A reformed and truly free Conſtitution can alone guard and extend thoſe principles of Public Virtue, the want of which in their due purity and extent is at once the effect of Deſpotiſm, and the pretence for its continuance.

You have not ſo deſpaired of the Commonweal, nor made the infirmities and miſeries which abuſe and uſurpation of Power have heaped upon it, as an apology for keeping it infirm and wretched. You have invited every Friend to the Peace and Freedom of the Nation with unſhaken courage and every vigorous and lawful effort to ſtand forth, and in this hour of diſtreſs ſupport the Cauſe of Reformation; retrieve Britain from that ruin in which a corrupt ſyſtem of Government muſt overwhelm her. It was the part of men, who with ſuch zeal and perſeverance exerted themſelves in a time of the utmoſt diſcouragement; whoſe admonition not a little contributed to ſnatch the Nation from her diſgraceful, ruinous, unnatural conteſt with America; whoſe interpoſition has put ſome check to the laviſh expenditure of the Public money, by former Miniſters, has taken ſomething from the enormous weight, (which to diminiſh in the leaſt was an arduous taſk while the preſent partiality of Repreſentation ſhould continue) the intolerable weight of that Influence which lies ready for the uſe of any Faction, Ariſtocratical, Regal, or of a corrupt Oligarchy, that can place itſelf at the helm.

Complete

Complete the great work as becomes theſe beginnings, anſwerably to theſe teſtimonies of integrity and wiſdom! The redreſs which could be only limited, temporary, and precarious, by applying to the effect, will be full, durable, certain, by going to the ſource. The greater portion of the Community your Propoſition of Reform ſhall embrace, the more juſt, glorious, and imperiſhable it will be.—May it eſtabliſh your names in the full veneration of Communities to riſe and flouriſh through the ſeries of unknown ages! *

I am, Sir, with the reſpect due to your character and ſituation of Public Truſt,

Your obedient humble ſervant,

CAPEL LOFFT.

TROSTON-HALL,
Near BURY, SUFFOLK,
Dec. 22, 1783.

Paper XVI.

* This, and the ſubſequent Letter of Mr. Lofft, were conſidered by the Editor to be Public Letters. But he was aware that they contained doctrine moſt obnoxious to Men in Power; and the publication of Mr. Lofft's plea for Univerſal Suffrage might increaſe that prejudice and animoſity from which the worthy Writer had recently ſuffered perſecutions. He had been diſmiſſed from the Magiſtracy of Suffolk for no reaſon aſſigned or aſſignable, but his attachment to the cauſe of Reform on the principles here maintained. And though the diſmiſſal reflected no diſgrace upon this virtuous and uſeful Magiſtrate, it would have been improper, without his conſent, to expoſe him to freſh inſults, by the publication of theſe Letters. His anſwer to the Editor's application was conſent given with the frankneſs becoming a Public Man, and the intrepidity worthy of the friend of Dr. John Jebb.

It is perhaps ſuperfluous to add, that the Yorkſhire Committee were not induced by Mr. Lofft's elaborate argument for Univerſal Suffrage to abandon their ground. They purſued their uſual policy; they voted thanks to the Author, without engaging in a controverſial correſpondence on the ſubject; giving him due credit for his Public Spirit, and virtuous ſcorn of Corruption, but retaining

Paper XVI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* CAPEL LOFFT, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, *near* BEDALE, *Jan.* 3, 1781.

Sir,

I RECEIVED your favour of the 22d of December on the 1*st of January*, just before the Meeting of the County of York; and the Committee having met the next morning, according to their adjournment, I took that opportunity to lay your Letter before the Yorkshire Gentlemen, in obedience to whose commands I return you the ſincere thanks of the Committee for your zeal in ſupporting the Common Cauſe, and for the candid communication of your ſentiments on the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation.

I am happy to inform you, that on a free diſcuſſion of that ſubject at a previous Meet-

retaining their own opinion, "that it behoved the Friends of their Country to deſcend from the airy heights of Speculation, and on plainer and ſafer ground to preſs forward to the attainment of a moderate Reform." Their ſyſtem was calculated not to captivate the imagination with a proſpect of Theoretic Reform, and a ſudden tranſition from groſs Corruption to a golden age of Purity; but it offered to the judgment of cautious and wary men a view of public benefits to be attained by peaceful means, and propoſed changes temperate and conſtitutional, yet great and efficacious as the actual circumſtances of the Country rendered practicable, or fit to be attempted.

In their ſyſtem and ſentiments the Chairman of the Committee concurred, and time has confirmed him in the judgment he then formed.——See his Letter to Major Cartwright, dated May 1ſt, 1801, near the end of this Volume.

ing of the County, many who had formerly been among the warmeſt opponents of the Aſſociation, declared themſelves friendly to the *objects* of our purſuit. And the Petition for a more Equal Repreſentation, which was agreed to by the County on the 1ſt of January, is to be conſidered as being ſupported by a much more general approbation of the County than that preſented laſt winter.

As ſoon as I receive copies of the Petition and the Proceedings at our two late County Meetings, I ſhall loſe no time in tranſmitting them to you and to your worthy Coadjutor Mr. Middleton, by whoſe united endeavours I hope the County of Suffolk may be induced once more to petition Parliament, and to re-appoint their Committee, without which the application of the County can hardly be expected to have its due weight and influence with Parliament.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

With great reſpect, &c.

C. WYVILL.

Paper XVII.

Letter *from* CAPEL LOFFT, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I SHOULD have earlier anſwered your favour of the 3d of January, conveying the unexpected Thanks of the Committee of Aſſociation, had I not waited to acknowledge your intended farther communication, which by ſome accident has not yet arrived.

Give me leave, Sir, to preſent my reſpectful acknowledgments to that candid and liberal ſpirit, which, looking beyond the perſon of a very private Individual, and unprejudiced by his avowed conſiderable differences of opinion as to the means of promoting the Common Cauſe, has honoured him with a teſtimony of approbation ſo greatly eſtimable. The Committee will accept theſe ſentiments as a grateful, though inadequate expreſſion of the ſincerity with which I feel myſelf affected by their attention. Where the communication of ideas on this all-concerning ſubject is thus encouraged, good aſſuredly muſt be the reſult. Others, with ſuperior advantages to ſerve the Cauſe, will be animated to exertion. A free and general correſpondence of Aſſociated Counties will, I truſt, yet take place; and this once eſtabliſhed, a Reform to the full extent for which the Public Voice ſhould declare, would reward their union.

It cannot, Sir, but be very agreeable to be mentioned by you with Mr. Middleton, and the other Friends of Reform in this County. What degree of probability there may be of another Meeting, with a view to that great object, taking place at preſent, I am unable to repreſent. An idea has been ſtarted of adopting the Reſolves and Aſſociation of the Quintuple Alliance, when laſt aſſembled, and making the latter to be the baſis of a Teſt to Candidates for this County, whenever the Diſſolution of Parliament, ſeemingly ſo near at hand, ſhall happen.—Should the propoſal be adopted, I ſhall hope the intelligence will be acceptable.

It is with much ſatisfaction I learn by your reſpected favour, that the ſenſe of the importance of the Cauſe ſtill more extends itſelf in your great and populous County.

I have the honour to be, with great reſpect,

Sir,

Your obedient humble ſervant,

CAPEL LOFFT.

TROSTON-HALL,
Near BURY, SUFFOLK,
March 1, 1784.

Paper XVIII.

Paper XVIII.

Reaſons *for the* Inſtitution *of the* BALLOT *in electing* Members *of* Parliament; *communicated in the year* 1783, *to the* Reverend C. WYVILL.

THE following Motion was made at a General Meeting of the County of Middleſex, held at Hackney the 14th of February, 1780:

Reſolved, That it be propoſed to the ſeveral Aſſociating Committees to conſider whether the introduction of Voters by Ballot in the election of our Repreſentatives may not form a proper *expreſs* object of National Aſſociation. If the rendering votes private ſhould tend to remove all undue impreſſions ariſing from the preſence or authority of Superiors, to defeat the intentions of thoſe whoſe ſucceſs depends only on improper influence, and thereby to diſcourage the attempts of Corruption for the future, the *People* will then have provided ſome ſecurity not only for the *right* of voting, but alſo for the free circumſtances under which to *exerciſe that right*.

The Motion having been poſtponed for future conſideration, the following reaſons are ſuggeſted in its ſupport.

It is the aſſertion of Harrington (who is for ballotting in all caſes) that the Iſraelites, the Athenians, Lacedemonians, Carthaginians, Romans, and Venetians, all voted by Ballot, Edit. 1747, p. 50, &c.; and this mode

of taking the ſuffrages of the People is approved of by others of the beſt Writers upon Government.

Cicero allows that "the Tablets or Ballot of the People of Rome (who gave their votes by throwing Tablets or little pieces of wood ſecretly into urns marked for the negative or affirmative) was a welcome Conſtitution to the People, as that which not impairing the aſſurance of their brows, increaſed the freedom of their judgment."

"At Venice, (the moſt durable Commonwealth now exiſting) all elections are made by Ballot; and all voting in the Great Council, the College, the Senate, and all the Courts of Judicature, are done by Ballot, without any miſtake, or any ſort of confuſion or diſturbance; which prevents bribery, faction, animoſities, and all bad conſequences." Cole's Mem. p. 16.—"Never any ſtrife happening between the Senate and People." Harrington, p. 45.

In New England, and in other of the Northern Colonies, they elect by Ballot with the like ſucceſs.

It is cuſtomary in the Borough of Lymington, in Hampſhire, to elect by Ballot. "This method (ſays the Relater) I know to be of great advantage, where it is made uſe of; it prevents animoſity and diſtaſte, and very much aſſiſts that Freedom which ought to be in Elections. No man in this way need fear the diſobliging his Landlord, Cuſtomer, or Benefactor."

nefactor." State Tracts in the time of King William Firſt, p. 181.

Anno 1734.—In the Lords Proteſt on the Motion for *electing Scotch Peers*, it is ſaid Voters may have their alliances drawing them one way, and their opinion and inclination another. Penſions from the Crown, Civil and Military Preferments, (in which are included Cuſtom-Houſe Officers, Exciſemen, &c. &c.) lay men under obligations to the Court, and they may be reduced to the hard neceſſity (under the power of an arbitrary Miniſter) either of loſing their employment, or of voting againſt their neareſt relations, and againſt their own opinions alſo; and they apprehend that no Election can be called perfectly free, where any number of Electors are under any influence whatſoever, by which they may be biaſſed in the freedom of their choice." Deb. Lords, 1767. Cal. 2. p. 108.

Judge Blackſtone, vol. 1, p. 180, "is againſt voting by Ballot in the Houſe of Commons, becauſe the conduct of every Member is ſubject to the future *cenſure* of his Conſtituents, and therefore ſhould be openly ſubmitted to *their* inſpection."—But the caſe of the People, who are accountable for their votes to God only, is the very reverſe; they ſhould therefore be confined to no mode of delivering their ſuffrages, but that which beſt ſecures their genuine choice; and when they are neither awed by fear, nor influenced by hope, on account of their ſuffrages being made public, it may be preſumed they will never elect

ſtrangers, or unqualified, or unworthy perſons, but will naturally prefer their own acquaintance, men of approved judgment and merit, as beſt entitled to their fulleſt confidence, for the depoſit of their own and their poſterity's Rights and Privileges.

At the India-Houſe, Royal Society, Hoſpitals, Diſpenſatories, they chooſe by Ballot with equal ſucceſs; as by this mode the Voters are leſs ſubject to the fear of an enemy, or baſhfulneſs towards friends, to impair or reſtrain their liberty.

Objection having been made, that taking the ſuffrage of the People by Ballot would prevent the inveſtigation of doubtful votes on a ſcrutiny, it is therefore propoſed, that, beſides the Returning Officer, each Candidate be authorized to appoint an Agent, to take an account of each Voter's name, before he offers his Ballot, with the deſcription of his freehold or right of poll, theſe Agents ſerving as a check upon each other; and in caſe where objection ismade, or the right appear doubtful, an oath to be tendered to ſuch perſon, wherein he ſhall ſwear to his having a legal qualification, (to be particularly deſcribed) and alſo that he has not given a previous vote in the then election; and upon taking ſuch oath, the perſon to be permitted to poll, otherwiſe to be rejected. It is preſumed that this teſt will be ſufficient ſecurity, as in caſe any perſon not entitled to vote ſhould take the oath, he will then be ſubject to, and ought to be indicted for perjury. This mode of eſtabliſhing votes taken at the Election,

Election, will prevent petitions for a ſcrutiny, and conſequently for all falſe returns with a view to it, which circumſtance hitherto has often given Seats to Members not having a majority of legal votes, and who have voted without right, until ſuch time as the petitions from the legal Members has been heard and finally determined.

For the Manner of Polling.

The Seat of Elections will uſually furniſh ſome large covered place or room, near one end of which ought to be placed three Perſons who take down the names and qualifications of the Voters, and thoſe authorized to make objections, &c. to them. Farther on let there be placed a table with a box thereon, containing a ſufficient number of pieces of paper, each of the ſame ſort, and not exceeding three inches ſquare; whereon are printed in one preciſe manner and form the names of the Candidates that ſtand the poll; at this table let a boy under ten years of age ſtand, who on each Voter's coming to the table ſhall take out *one* of the Ballots between his finger and thumb, and holding it up, ſhall give it to ſuch Voter; each Voter receiving his poll, ſhall retire one by one into a high ſtall, with entrance for light at the top, ſuch ſtall having at its entrance a curtain loaded at the bottom with heavy weights, which curtain he ſhall have fallen behind him, ſo as to conceal him from view; and in each ſtall a pen, ink, and

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ſand to be placed; (of which ſtalls more or fewer ſhall be provided, in proportion to the number of Voters) the Voters having here in private ſcratched with a ſingle ſtraight line, the names of the Candidate or Candidates for whom he gives his ſuffrage, and ſhall before he quits the ſtall carefully fold up the paper, (putting the printing within ſide) in four equal parts at leaſt, and then ſhall come out of the ſtall, holding this his Ballot, ſo folded, between his thumb and finger only, and deliver the ſame to another boy under ten years of age, placed at another table; who is to receive the one Ballot ſo folded between his finger and thumb only, and let it fall through a ſlit of paper or wood, large enough to receive it, into an urn; when the poll for the day cloſes another boy under ten years of age, ſhall take out the polls one by one, and deliver them to the Sheriff or to his Subſtitute; who in a book with ruled columns ſhall publicly, beneath the names of the Candidates, according as one or other is ſcratched in each Ballot, draw a black daſh or ſtroke thus ——— numbering each Candidate's vote 1, 2, 3, and ſo on, to each deſk in ſucceſſion; then let each Ballot be delivered to the Agents appointed by the Candidates to take the poll, to be by them conveyed from one to the other in rotation, to be taken down by each in like manner; which being done, the laſt perſon ſo taking down the poll to fold it up as before, and give it to the other boy, who is to put the Ballot (ſo folded) into another like urn, placed upon

upon another table. When all the Ballots polled within the day are taken down, ſhould the perſons ſo appointed ſo agree in all their number of votes given for each Candidate, in that caſe the *Ballots to be all counted, and the Sheriff or his Subſtitute to ſign the books of the Agents ſo appointed to take account of the Ballots.* But in caſe of any diſagreement in the numbers, then the Ballots to be re-examined until the books all agree; and when this happens, the Ballots are inſtantly, publicly, and without further inſpection to be burnt. If more than one Ballot be folded up together and ſcratched, or more names ſcratched in any ſingle Ballot taken than are Members to be returned, ſuch Ballots are to go for nothing, and be rejected and torn. If the poll laſt more than one day, the ſame method to be taken each day's poll, which, when finally cloſed, the total number of votes given for each Candidate to be written down againſt the names in words at length, in each book, to be ſigned by the Sheriff, or by his Subſtitute.

But as a farther improvement.

And that the Election of Members to ſerve in Parliament may not only have the real ſuffrage of the People, but alſo may be rendered more convenient to Voters, it is propoſed,

If the Election be in a Borough Town or City, then the poll to be taken at one common place; but if in a County, then the moſt central Market-Town of each Hundred, or other proper Diviſion of the County to be appointed (Voters commonly having occaſion

to

to frequent Market-Towns); or if ſuch moſt central Town be more than [15] miles from any part of each Diviſion, and if two Market-Towns can be found, not leſs than [7] miles diſtant from each other, and that ſhall be one or other of them within [15] miles of the ſeveral parts of ſuch Diviſion, then two ſuch Market-Towns ſhall be appointed: but if two Market-Towns cannot be found to ſuffice for anſwering the condition of bringing each part of the Diviſion within [15] miles of a place for voting, then ſo many to be appointed as ſhall anſwer this purpoſe, provided they are not nearer than [7] miles to each other, intending, by that means, not only to provide for the convenience of Voters, but alſo to avoid that probability of their votes being diſcovered, which might ariſe from the Voters being very few in number, and all among the neighbourhood. But ſhould the reaſon of this precaution be thought of leſs importance than the finiſhing the County Elections in one day, and ſo to avoid a continuation of intrigue, riot, expence, influence, diſpute, and ill humour, and the preventing many from polling in different Counties, in that caſe a more ſimple method may be adopted, viz. To have fourteen days notice given of the Election in the *Gazette* publiſhed by Authority; the ſuffrages of the People then to be taken on the day fixed upon, in the Pariſh Church of each County; or, if there be no Pariſh Church, then in the place where the Pariſh buſineſs is uſually tranſacted; on which day proper perſons

ſons, Inhabitants of each Pariſh, to be choſen by the Sheriffs, and approved of by the Candidates, who ſhall be ready prepared at ſuch place by nine o'clock in the morning, to take the ſuffrages of the Pariſhioners in the manner before deſcribed; the poll finally to cloſe at four o'clock in the afternoon, when the ſaid appointed perſons, in the manner before deſcribed, are publicly to examine the votes, and to make out and ſign two certificates, with the numbers that voted for each Candidate in words at length; one of which certificates to be immediately tranſmitted to the Sheriff of the County, the other to be depoſited for its forth-coming, if required: the giving the ſuffrages thus to be concluded in one day. In caſe any one of the Candidates, or their Agent, ſhould doubt the juſtice of the return, the ſaid appointed perſons ſhall both of them make oath of the truth of their return, to the beſt of their knowledge.

Paper XIX.

REASONS againſt the INSTITUTION of the BALLOT.

THE practice of the Ballot has been ſtrenuouſly recommended by Harrington in his Oceana; and his opinion has been followed by Hume, in his Plan of a Perfect Commonwealth. Each of theſe authorities, upon ſuch

ſuch a queſtion, is very conſiderable, and the meaſure itſelf is ſpecious. Its pernicious conſequences are diſtant, and eaſily overlooked; but its promiſed advantage, the excluſion of influence from popular Elections, is obvious and immediate. It ſeems, therefore, to be that ſort of object, which in times of national fermentation is moſt likely to become a favourite purſuit of the People. And yet a propoſal, in its appearance ſo favourable to Liberty, and ſupported by Political Philoſophers of ſuch celebrity, was rejected by the County of Middleſex in 1780, almoſt without examination; and no other Public Body of Men ſeems to have noticed the queſtion, during that period of popular zeal and activity. The negative of one County, and the ſilence of all the reſt of the Counties, and other Aſſemblies, in part may be imputed to their unacquaintance with political diſquiſitions; but it would be want of candour to deny that it is principally to be aſcribed to their prudence and moderation, with which their zeal for Reformation appears to have been duly tempered.

But the time may come, when the People, irritated by long continued oppreſſions, may be leſs attached to the principles of the Conſtitution, and even to the modes of Election to which they have been accuſtomed; when ſpecious novelties may be liſtened to with pleaſure, and the influence of Harrington may tempt the eager admirers of Liberty, and that of Hume may perſuade her more

cautious

cautious friends to promote the meaſure of the Ballot. Propoſitions, which upon one occaſion have been diſmiſſed without diſcuſſion, or any clear diſcernment of their injurious conſequences, upon a change of circumſtances may not improbably be adopted with equal haſte, and the ſame want of information. To be guarded againſt the admiſſion of the Ballot, on any future emergency, the People ought to compare the value of its immediate effects in checking influence, with its remoter conſequences, its natural and unavoidable tendencies to degrade the morals of the nation, and to introduce thoſe habits of artifice, cowardice, and perfidy, which are the ſure forerunners of Slavery. In this view, perhaps, even the brief obſervations here offered to the Reader may not be wholly fruitleſs and unſeaſonable.

The immediate effects of the Ballot in popular Elections may be conſidered either as it would operate, when oppoſed to great and over-ruling influence, or when oppoſed to influence not over-ruling, yet ſtill conſiderable.

In the firſt caſe, then, it ſeems highly probable that the Ballot would be found either abſolutely nugatory, or, in the courſe of years, deſtructive to that high ſpirit of probity and honour, without which National Freedom cannot long exiſt; for in ages diſtinguiſhed by the general integrity of the People, the obligation of a promiſe would be held inviolable, and ſecrecy of ſuffrage would be alto-

gether

gether unavailing. In times of great national virtue, the interference of powerful men would produce exactly the ſame effect in Elections as if no proviſion had been eſtabliſhed to check their influence; they would ſolicit and obtain the promiſe of their dependents ſuffrage, and the promiſe would be kept with fidelity. But in a ſeries of years more or leſs long, the temptation of ſecrecy would gradually introduce a leſs ſcrupulous adherence to engagements; and exactly as men became more and more unfaithful to their promiſes, the efficacy of the Ballot would be found to increaſe in a ſimilar proportion. But when Probity and Honour are beaten down, Public Libetry cannot long be kept up; when the tree has been ſhaken to its roots, the branches may retain their leaves, but they will be robbed of their fruit; the ancient forms of Freedom may be preſerved, but its ſubſtance will be loſt: a Nation of faithleſs Men muſt be a Nation of Slaves.

But in another view, the miſchiefs of ſecret ſuffrage would be equally great; and though remote, would be inevitable. For the genuine ſpirit of Liberty is manly and benevolent. It is the tendency of National Freedom to produce a general character of fortitude and kindneſs; and again, where fortitude and general kindneſs of character are prevalent, their tendency is manifeſt to preſerve or to introduce National Freedom. Inſtitutions therefore which, inſtead of nouriſhing the manly and benevolent affections, are calculated

to extinguiſh them, whatever their pretenſions may be in other reſpects, muſt be conſidered as injurious to Liberty, and inconſiſtent with it. Now there is in the myſtery of the Ballot ſomewhat diſcordant, ſomewhat revolting to the feelings of a Freeman. Such a man would wiſh to act with a generous openneſs, upon all occaſions, relative to the Public: He would have nothing to gain by concealment, and nothing to fear from publicity. This manlineſs of ſpirit, this generous courage, is inſeparable from the conſciouſneſs of Freedom, and it ought to be carefully cheriſhed, as its neceſſary preſervative, by inſtitutions which would call upon the Freeman frequently to act in public buſineſs, openly, and in the face of his Countrymen. This would cheriſh in his breaſt the ſcorn of concealment, and thus the character of the intrepid Patriot would beſt be formed. But the precaution of the Ballot would produce an effect directly oppoſite. It would deſtroy the manly ſpirit which the exertions of our open Elections foſter, and it would teach the ſculking Voter to ſhun obſervation, to dread publicity, and gradually to aſſume the timorous character of Servitude. Open Elections alſo are friendly to the growth of the ſocial affections, and a generous regard in the Elector for the welfare of his Country. Election conteſts, conducted upon ſome principle reſpecting the intereſt of the Public, as they frequently are, though leſs frequently than they ought to be, manifeſtly tend to diſcourage the ſelfiſh ſpirit of the Egotiſt, and

accuſtom the Voter to feel and act for the good of others, more eſpecially for that of the Community. But the ſecrecy of the Ballot would have a contrary effect. By its ſolitary privacy it would damp the generous ardour of Patriotiſm; it would benumb the feelings of ſympathy and zeal, excited by the publicity of ſuffrage, by the diſcuſſions, the concerted efforts, and the harangues of our open Elections. By diſcharging the Voter from reſponſibility to the public opinion, it would gradually teach him to be ſelfiſh, to regard only his own individual eaſe and ſecurity, and to neglect the common good, till at laſt every generous ſentiment would be ſtifled and ſubdued by the darkneſs, ſilence, and apathy of the Ballot. It is needleſs to point out how fatal this muſt be to National Liberty.

In any caſe in which an influence conſiderable, but not over-ruling, is ſuppoſed to exiſt, the Ballot would be liable to the ſame objections which have been enumerated, in conſidering the ſtronger caſe of an over-powering influence; and, moreover, ſome additional diſadvantages, ariſing from that peculiar ſituation, would be imputable to it. In the ſtronger caſe, the Voter's conſcience would be overawed, and he would vote that he might live. In the leſs cogent caſe, he would be tempted to ſilence the dictates of his conſcience, that ſome paltry ſcheme of advancement might ſucceed. Let the heſitating Voter be protected by the myſtery of the Ballot from

from the infamy attached to conduct notoriously inconsistent and unprincipled, immediately his hesitation would cease, and his vote would be securely given, not to conscience, but to interest. In such a case the secret Voter would be a corrupt one; and yet the suffrage of the same Voter, if given under the check of public opinion, often would be given as probity directed.

Thus it appears, that whether the influence dreaded be over-ruling, or only powerful in an inferior degree, publicity in Elections is preferable to secrecy. An over-ruling influence could not be restrained by this device of the Ballot, without producing greater evils than it would prevent; and an inferior degree of influence would be better overcome by the awe of public censure, than eluded by the secrecy of suffrage. That secrecy would often conceal the guilt of timorous corruption, but it could not free the virtuous man from the obligation of his promise.

But publicity alone, it must be confessed, would be found an insufficient security against influence predominant as that of the Crown in Great Britain. Here then the safety of the Public has been consulted by a subsidiary regulation, and Disfranchisement has been wisely preferred to the Ballot. By Disfranchisement, men who are absolutely dependent on the Crown are freed from the embarrassing incumbrance of a vote, which could not be given without offence to conscience, or displeasure to the Minister. By honest Voters

ſo circumſtanced, the privation cannot be conſidered injurious to them; it only takes away that franchiſe which *they* could not ſafely exerciſe, and which the corrupt alone would wiſh to retain. And as a preventive of miſchief to the Public, Diſfranchiſement is a ſafer and more powerful remedy than the Ballot; it more effectually guards the purity of Elections; it cuts off the interference of Power, and it produces theſe beneficial effects by means which have no tendency gradually to ſap or deſtroy the Virtue and Liberty of the People. Yet ſtill even this ſafe and powerful remedy againſt influence ought not to be applied, except in caſes of manifeſt neceſſity; and in the application the greateſt caution ought to be obſerved not to exceed the bounds which that neceſſity may preſcribe. In allowing this preſervative to be applied or continued, it is feared that the Legiſlature may not have been, at all times, as cautious and tender as it has been wiſe in preferring it to the Ballot. It may with reaſon be thought, probably, that the Diſfranchiſing Statutes of Henry VI. as well as that of the preſent King, have not exceeded the bounds of prudence and neceſſity. But when all Copyholders, and a great majority of Houſeholders paying Taxes, are actually ſuffered to remain under an unneceſſary and injurious Diſfranchiſement, originally introduced by the tyranny of the times, the hardſhip of their caſe, and the conſequent injury to the Public, furniſh a freſh and cogent

gent argument for the interference of the People to effect a Reformation of Parliament, by extending the Right of Suffrage to theſe diſfranchiſed claſſes.

Here the argument againſt the Ballot might be cloſed, if reſpect for the authority of Harrington did not require ſome attention to be paid to a reaſon which he ſeems to have thought deciſive in its favour, viz. that it was the practice of modern Venice, and ſome of the moſt celebrated Republics in ancient times. In reaſoning on the cuſtoms of the Nations alluded to, there is frequently much uncertainty. Some of them lived in ages very remote, and their hiſtory is too obſcure to aſcertain the effects of any peculiar practice, or to eſtabliſh its exiſtence as a general cuſtom: and arguments from premiſes ſo uncertain, for adopting ſuch regulations here, muſt be ſtill more obſcure and uncertain. Others lived under Governments extremely diſſimilar from our own; ſo that their practice, even tho' it may have been well ſuited to the temper of thoſe Nations, or to the views of their reſpective Governments, can afford no concluſive argument, that the introduction of it in this Country would be beneficial.

Of the Carthaginian cuſtoms, and their conſequences, nothing ought to be ſaid; becauſe nothing can be known, as it ought to be, reſpecting the Hiſtory of Carthage.—Among the Hebrews, the practice of the Ballot appears to have been only occaſional, or rather,

perhaps, casual; but had it been otherwise, their Theocratic Government was so perfectly singular and unlike every other Government, that it seems to be incapable of comparison, and the customs of that Nation inapplicable to any other People.

Even the Athenian Democracy, unbalanced as it was by the power of a Senate or a Prince, differs too widely from the mixed Government of the British Islands, to admit any safe comparison. The success of a political expedient in one Commonwealth affords no rational recommendation to repeat that experiment in another in which the Constitution may be essentially different, and may have formed the People to habits and manners totally opposite. Admit for a moment that the Ballot was necessary and beneficial at Athens, it might be the reverse at London, where a different form of Liberty is established, and different manners prevail. But this were to admit far too much; the Ballot was indeed acceptable to the Democracy of Athens, unbridled as it was, and impatient of any superior authority. But its effects were not beneficial; instead of curbing, it rather tended to encourage and increase the vices inseparable from that form of Government; it not only operated to prevent the improper interference of the rich in Elections and the affairs of State, but to diminish and annihilate the influence of the wise and good. Hence at Athens the excellencies and the faults of a

Democratic

Democratic Government ſeem to have been carried to the laſt extreme on either ſide. In her annals examples may be found of whatever could excite admiration and applauſe, or provoke our diſguſt and abhorrence.

By the unlimited Freedom of her Citizens, their faculties were impelled to the utmoſt degree of exertion and activity, and never did any Commonwealth produce a greater number of men, diſtinguiſhed by their heroiſm, by their eloquence and Political Wiſdom, and by their excellence in Poetry, Hiſtory, Philoſophy, and all the finer Arts. Yet who is ſo dazzled by the ſplendour and glory of Athens, in theſe reſpects, as to overlook the follies, crimes, and miſeries which were equally the production of the ſame Government? Or who can forget that her age of exertion and excellence was ſoon paſt, that her heroes and ſages ſoon diſappeared, that the loſs of her independence, from the want of ſteadineſs and wiſdom in her counſels, extinguiſhed all her glories; and the national character of levity, raſhneſs, and wanton tyranny, at laſt was uncompenſated by any part of her former excellence.—In this ſhort, but faithful ſketch of the manners and temper of the people of Athens, what inducements can be found to innovate here on their model, to adopt their Ballot, or to aſſimilate in any degree the Britiſh character to their's, and exchange our ſecurities for life, property and reputation, for their turbulence and inſecurity?

At Rome, however, the levity of a Democracy was tempered with the wiſdom of a Patrician Senate, and the princely dignity of the Conſuls. The form of Government, though different in ſome important reſpects, in others correſponded nearly with our own; and the national valour and gravity of the Romans did not very materially differ from the manlineſs and humanity of the Britiſh character. Here then the compariſon would be juſt, and the application would be deciſive, if the Ballot had in fact been advantageous to the Commonwealth. But the vices of the Roman Conſtitution lay too deep to be cured by this feeble expedient. *They grew with the growth of Rome*, and were only palliated by the integrity and patriotiſm of the People, in the earlier period of the Republic, when the method of Secret Suffrage had no ſenſible effect. Its inutility at that time is evident; for after much ſtruggling, when the Plebeians had obtained the right of eligibility to the higheſt offices in the State, they declined to avail themſelves of it, for ſome ages, giving the preference in Elections conſtantly to the Patrician Candidate. In after times, when the character of the Romans, had begun to decline in virtue, the reverſe of this practice was obſervable; the efficacy of the Ballot might then be felt in the choice of Plebeian Candidates, but the practice of it haſtened the degeneracy of the Roman manners, and accelerated the ruin of the Commonwealth.

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From the practice of modern Venice, no encouragement to adopt the Ballot, as the means of ſecuring Liberty, can be derived; for, in fact, it was practiſed there not to ſecure National Liberty, for none was enjoyed; not to promote the improvement of ſociety, for none was deſired; its only object was to ſecure the uſurped authority of an Ariſtocracy, and to perpetuate the dominion which that Body exerciſed over the Nation with a rigour and ſeverity not exceeded in any but the moſt deſpotic and uncivilized Monarchies of Europe. And doubtleſs the ſecrecy of the Ballot was not ill calculated to effect this purpoſe, by preventing the riſe of factious animoſities among the Nobles themſelves. But, while it ſecured the tranquil enjoyment of their exceſſive power, it extinguiſhed every hope of improvement; it confirmed the depreſſion of the People, and degraded the character of the Nobles, by a ſpirit of artifice, ſelfiſhneſs, and hypocriſy, which it introduced or increaſed, to the excluſion of every manly ſentiment of patriotiſm and benevolence. Hence, the total want of public ſpirit and exertion in the hour of danger to the Republic of Venice. Hence her recent fall, firſt overthrown by the arms of France, then abſorbed by the Auſtrian Monarchy, and neither defended nor lamented by her Citizens.

To eke out the deficient argument drawn from the practice of Venice and the ancient Republics, it may be pleaded, that the Ballot

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is not unknown in Britain, that the Elections of ſome of our Commercial Companies, &c. are conducted with advantage in that mode, and that even the choice of Members of our Parliamentary Committees is ſometimes determined by Ballot. To ſuch a plea as this, it ſhall only be replied, that if the Treaſury choſe to exert their power of ſeduction at the India-Houſe, the ſecrecy of ſuffrage would be found unable to reſiſt it for a day. The practice of balloting for Committees of Parliament confirms what has already been obſerved in the courſe of this argument. On the occaſions alluded to, the Ballot is performed with all due myſtery: but it ſo has happened, that the Miniſter's Liſt has always been balloted for by a deciſive majority. The Members may have ſeen that Liſt; they may have promiſed to ſupport it; and they have hitherto had too much honour to be guilty of a breach of faith.

Upon the whole it appears that the ſecrecy of ſuffrage in popular Elections would tend to corrupt the morals, and degrade the ſpirit of the Nation, and thus would render it, in a ſeries of years, undeſerving of Freedom, and incapable to defend it; but that the publicity of thoſe Elections has an oppoſite tendency, to inſpire the Conſtituent Bodies with a patriotic zeal for the welfare of the Public, and to give a tone of manly courage and vigour to the national character: at the ſame time, by ſubjecting the Repreſentative to public animadverſion,

malverſion, it operates as a uſeful check to prevent his miſconduct.

When Harrington recommended the Ballot, and Hume followed his opinion, it is probable that they had not ſufficiently adverted to theſe conſequences on either hand; that they were miſled partly by the plauſibility of the meaſure, when conſidered as an immediate bar to influence; partly from their deference to the practice of the moſt celebrated Republics in ancient and modern times. But the Editor, with all reſpect to thoſe great Authorities, muſt diſſent from them on this queſtion. Conſidering the remoter effects of ſecret ſuffrage to be certain, and in a high degree pernicious to the community, and publicity to be the very vital principle of Liberty, he muſt expreſs his earneſt wiſh that the excluſion of the Ballot from the popular Elections of the Country may be perpetual.

Poſtſcript to "Reaſons *againſt the* Inſtitution *of the* Ballot."

Under the late Conſtitution of the Canton of Berne the Senators were elected by the Ballot, and by Lot, alternately practiced, in a complicated method which may be found minutely deſcribed in the 2d Volume of Planta's Hiſtory of the Helvetic Confederacy. This mode of Election may have been adopted with ſucceſs to prevent canvaſſing for votes by means which were diſgraceful to the Patricians

tricians of Berne. By thus preſerving the noble families from the contempt of the People, it may have tended to prolong their monopoly of power, but it had no tendency favourable to General Liberty. The ſame remarks which have been applied to the State of Venice, are applicable alſo to that of Berne. But one exception the caſe affords, which it were unjuſt to paſs over in ſilence. The monopoly of power indeed was ſimilar in theſe States, but it was exerciſed, in general, with a paternal mildneſs in the Swiſs Canton, which was the reverſe of the harſh and jealous temper of the Venetian Ariſtocracy. In the Venetian Country, the People were diſarmed: In the Canton of Berne, the People were univerſally trained to arms. Hence, while the Subjects of Venice were depreſſed by their Rulers, the Berneſe People, though deprived of Political Liberty, enjoyed the bleſſings of a lenient Government. So lenient was it, and ſo few were the reſtraints and burthens impoſed on the Country, that it might be ſaid, almoſt with literal truth, that "the People knew not that they had a Government *." Yet this uſually mild Government loſt the

* The expreſſion actually uſed in a converſation on this ſubject by a reſpectable Citizen of Lauſanne to the Editor; whoſe reply was, that "they would do well then to overlook ſpeculative defects, to ſhun innovation, and to content themſelves with the practical happineſs which they enjoyed." This was his advice in 1785, to an opulent Subject of Berne. Had he held a ſimilar converſation with one of its Senators, his advice probably would have been different, and a timely conceſſion to the wiſhes of the People would have been his recommendation.

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hearts of their People by an obſtinate refuſal to admit any Reform in the Conſtitution, and the harſh means employed to ſilence complaints. At the moment of the recent invaſion, they were ill ſupported by one part of their Subjects, while a large portion of them, in the heat of revolutionary zeal, ranged themſelves on the ſide of the Foe. The Senate of Berne found, when it was too late, that by diſguſting the People they had ruined the Country; and though placed at the head of numerous tribes inured to military ſervice, they were able to oppoſe but a ſhort reſiſtance to the arms of the French Revolutioniſts.

In this unfortunate caſe, great faults appear to have been committed by both the People and the Senate of Berne. On the one hand, the People were highly culpable for ſeeking ſocial improvement through commotion, and by the aid of foreign arms. To preſerve the independence and ſelf-directing power of his Country, is the Citizen's primary duty. They are the ſprings whence the happineſs of Society ought to be derived. And where a defective Conſtitution obſtructs or impairs the national power of ſelf-direction, the People by perſevering in peaceful exertions to procure redreſs will ultimately obtain it. This at leaſt ſeems highly probable, and therefore the Berneſe People never ſhould have deſpaired of it, and never ſhould have riſqued by their impatience thoſe deplorable calamities which were but the too natural

conſequence of foreign interference.—On the other hand, the Senate ought never to have forgotten that equitable government is not a boon which Rulers at their diſcretion may grant or deny: It is a bleſſing which, at all times, the People have a right to enjoy, not precarioufly, at the pleaſure of the Magiſtrate, but permanently and ſecurely, under the protection of thoſe beneficial laws which are the neceſſary reſult of a well-organized Conſtitution. And when a nation, which may have been long content with a defective form of Government, have begun to be diſſatisfied with it, and to complain of its defects; and ſome perſons may have pointed out and requeſted Reforms which they apprehend would more effectually ſecure to them the benefits of a mild and impartial Adminiſtration, the demands of the Reformers are intitled to the Magiſtrates' reſpect; and if ſupported by the approbation of the Public, they cannot be refuſed without injuſtice. The Rulers of ſuch a nation, were they patriotic and diſintereſted, or were they only ſagacious and truly politic, would not exert their utmoſt art and influence to ſtifle or elude ſuch complaints, but rather would willingly liſten to them, and even anticipate the declared wiſh of the Public. Unfortunately, the Senate of Berne determined to ſupport the abuſes alluded to, and, by rejecting all applications for Reform, drove the diſguſted Peaſants and Burghers of their Provinces into the moſt violent exceſſes.

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The provocation was given by the ſelfiſh obſtinacy * of the Senate. From that Body it was juſt to expect greater wiſdom than from the People, and therefore the miſconduct of the Senate ſeems to deſerve ſeverer reprobation.

* A few weeks before the Revolution of Berne was effected, the alarmed Senate endeavoured to conciliate the malcontents of the Pays de Vaud, by a Proclamation acknowledging the defects of the Conſtitution, and promiſing to correct them. But it was too late, and produced no reconciliation. The malcontents had concerted their meaſures with the French General, and the miſchief done by the recent ſeverities of the Senate was found to be irreparable.

NUMBER XXXVI.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

YORK, *Jan.* 22*d*, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I DID not anſwer your laſt ſooner, as it related merely to the mode of circulating the Report, which we have done as much to your plan as poſſible, though the ſnowy day prevented a ſufficient number of the Sub-Committee to meet me at the Tavern, yet a ſhort letter was written for Gray to copy, and I hope it will meet with your approbation. But what, alas, will ſignify all our attempts at this criſis, when the minds of every man in the kingdom are turned to a more material point at preſent than our *ſingle* object. For what good poſſible think you could occur to the nation, (was our point now actually carried) if Charles Fox had the Indies at his diſpoſal? I am perſuaded the Nation at large muſt ſee how that buſineſs ends before they will join our Petition in ſufficient numbers.

I ſup-

I ſuppoſe you have ere this heard of our new Member's defection, if the word can be applied to a man who has given only one vote. Yet, when that vote was given to turn Mr. Pitt out of his Majeſty's Councils, I think it may be called, if not a defection from Aſſociating Principles, a defection from Virtue. As to myſelf, I conſole myſelf with having formerly done every thing in my power to convince you that he was not the man proper for a County Member; and if, as I fear you did, you then might think what I ſaid might ariſe from ſome little perſonal pique, I truſt you will now conceive I had a more enlarged motive. The truth is, I have known him from his infancy; I may juſtly ſay that I have been a father to him; yet, on many trying occaſions, I have ſeen him cloſe and reſerved, where he ought to have been open and explicit; raſh and determined, when he ſhould have been deliberate or dubious, and always too ſoon cooled in his purſuits, if the expected ſucceſs did not immediately attend him. Nevertheleſs, I muſt freely own to you that his behaviour on the laſt occaſion here had gone far towards reconciling me to the idea that he might do well in Parliament. For this purpoſe I gave him the beſt advice I could, in a pretty long private converſation I had with him, which he ſeemed to take in ſo friendly a manner, and to be ſo fully convinced of its propriety, that I could not help hoping it would have a complete effect on a mind, which, though cloſe, I had never had reaſon

to think insincere. But he has voted, and so voted, at such a time, and after such a debate, that we must now hope no more from him than a mere support of Parliamentary Reform, if ever that question should chance to be agitated. This will not satisfy me, nor do I think it will you.

It is certain that Mr. Pitt has done the noble thing reported, viz. relieved the Nation from Barre's Pension, by giving the Clerk of the Pells to him. Such rare instances as these of Public Spirit are necessary to my mind to keep me in common charity with human nature.

There are engines here at work to get a Petition similar to London from this City; but though I have some hopes, the scheme is not ripe enough to dilate upon. *

Believe me
Your's most truly,
W. MASON.

Paper II.

* To the County Meeting at York in 1779, the Editor was indebted for his political connection with Mr. Mason. They soon perceived that their views in meeting were the same; that they wished alike, from motives of humanity, and from a regard to Constitutional Principles, to put a stop to the Civil War with America; and from a detestation of Corruption, as a principle of Government, to promote a Reformation of Parliament. In the prosecution of those objects for several years, they thought, and they acted almost without a shade of difference; and on many difficult occasions the Editor with pleasure acknowledges, that he received from Mr. Mason the most decisive support. Hence what at first was merely a political connection, gradually became an intimate and confidential union, in which friendship was confirmed by mutual esteem. This personal attachment continued unbroken to the end of Mr. Mason's life; and the Editor still reflects upon his friendship with cordial satisfaction. But he must not dissemble that their political connection did not remain equally uninterrupted

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Earl *of* EFFINGHAM *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

LONDON, *Jan.* 16, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I WAS yesterday favoured with your Letter, and will chearfully fulfil the office I undertook at York of conveying the Papers, &c.

This day the City of London have been with the King to address his Majesty on the

rupted. After a long co-operation in favour of Civil Liberty, after having supported with equal zeal the Cause of Reform in England, and with equal sincerity rejoiced at the dawn of Liberty in France, and the prospect of her complete emancipation by a pacific Revolution, they differed on the subject of Religious Liberty, and that difference produced their political separation. Some of the Editor's sentiments, respecting the defects of our Religious Establishment and the Right of Toleration, had been known to Mr. Mason from an early period of their union, to be different from his own. But considered as a difference in matters then merely speculative, and never likely to be the subject of actual contest, the opposition of their sentiments had been regarded on either side as comparatively unimportant. But when the Repeal of the Test-Act came to be agitated by the Protestant Dissenters, the case was altered. The Editor felt it his duty to support their claim; and in behalf of them, and of Religious Men of all denominations, he argued for unlimited Toleration, and a perfect Restoration of the Rights of Conscience. Soon after the appearance of his argument on this subject, he visited his Friend at Aston, from whom he found his usual cordiality. But at the moment of departure, the Editor was reminded by his Friend, "that he had uniformly and zealously supported him through all the struggles of the Association;" but, added Mr. Mason, if he (Mr. Wyvill) chose to continue his support to the Claims of the Dissenters, their political connection must be at an end. The Editor, just then stepping into his chaise, only replied, "He was sorry for it."

Soon after this separation, finding the Nation was in danger of being engaged in a War with France, on principles unjust and hostile to Liberty, as that with America, the Editor published in the Letter to Mr. Pitt his Remonstrance on that subject. In this

conduct

ſubject of the India Bill and Change of Miniſtry. The Addreſs you will ſee in the Papers. I hear the example will be much followed, which, if it is, may put it out of the power of the curſed Coalition to throw the Country into confuſion, as they are now aiming to do, being, as it ſhould ſeem, reſolved to ruin or to ſuit the State.

It will give you pleaſure to know a moſt honourable proceeding of Mr. Pitt. The

conduct he had the misfortune to be diſapproved by Mr. Maſon. After that, Mr. Maſon continued to give his countenance to Mr. Pitt's altered ſyſtem of Adminiſtration. Reverſing the principles of the early and popular period of his miniſtry, Mr. Pitt ſtretched the Undue Influence of the Crown to a degree exceeding all example; yet the confidence of Mr. Maſon in his favourite Miniſter remained unſhaken. In the courſe of a few years Mr. Maſon beheld a ſeries of harſh and oppreſſive meaſures, by which almoſt every popular Right for which he had been contending ſo earneſtly, was infringed or deſtroyed; he even witneſſed the violation of the Bill of Rights, the modern charter of our Liberties, yet with unabated zeal he ſtill ſupported the Miniſter. On this want of conſiſtency in his Friend and former Aſſociate, the Editor is not diſpoſed to remark with any harſhneſs of cenſure. He certainly did regret it, as a defect in a great and elevated character. Some degree of Cathedral Prejudice, and the prevalent panic of the Times may probably account for it; and it will be conſidered by impartial men, as one of thoſe venial infirmities from which human nature is never wholly exempt. Amidſt the ſhining qualities which he poſſeſſed, this imperfection almoſt diſappears. It ought to be overlooked, or willingly excuſed. But this will ſtill be remembered with high reſpect, that Mr. Maſon was a man of the pureſt morals; of ſtrict probity; of unſullied ſincerity, and of a manly independent mind. It will be owned with affection and gratitude, that he was truly benevolent and friendly; that he laboured long with active and diſintereſted zeal to promote the welfare of his fellow men; and in the days when Court Favour had begun to ſmile upon him, he, for their cauſe, generouſly ſacrificed his views of profeſſional elevation, and, to the laſt moment of his life, his ſcorn of corruption, whether in the hireling Senator, or the ſupple fawning Courtier, was undiminiſhed. In theſe reſpects he was ſtill uniform and conſiſtent: Admired as a Poet, he was beloved and revered as a truly virtuous man.

office

office of Clerk of the Pells being vacant, few people doubted but he would (as all former Chancellors of the Exchequer have done) make it an advantage to his own family.—Inſtead of that, he has reſolved to lighten the Public Burthens by giving it in exchange to ſome perſon who is now poſſeſſed of a Penſion for Life. I am ſure you join with me in thinking that we cannot more truly ſerve our Country than by ſupporting a man who, tho' not in affluent circumſtances, is capable of giving ſo ſolid a proof of his diſintereſted generoſity and integrity.

I am, dear Sir,

Your moſt faithful

and obedient ſervant,

SEFFINGHAM.*

* The Earl of Effingham, though a Soldier, was on the principles of Liberty adverſe to the War with America; and in conſequence of it, though much attached to his profeſſion, he reſigned his commiſſion, as Lieutenant Colonel in the Army. His ſupport of the meaſures of the Yorkſhire Committee was firm, ſincere, and ſeldom, yet tempered with prudence. Not long after the date of this Letter, he accepted the Government of Jamaica, where he was diſtinguiſhed by the wiſdom and humanity of his conduct. The aſſiſtance he generouſly gave to the diſtreſſed Colonifts of St. Domingo in 1791, was approved by the Government of England, then willing to preſerve Peace with France.—His Lordſhip died Governor of Jamaica.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* F. N. C. Mundy, Eſq.

Burton-Hall, *Jan.* 23, 1784.

Sir,

I AM ſorry that unavoidable accidents, chiefly occaſioned by the uncommon fall of ſnow in this County, have ſo long retarded the communication of the incloſed Papers from the Yorkſhire Committee.

From theſe Papers you will perceive, Sir, that the cauſe of Parliamentary Reformation has received a very reſpectable additional ſupport in this County, by many of the former Opponents of the Aſſociation now concurring with us to attain *the object* of our purſuit. Hence I am enabled to aſſure you, that the preſent application to Parliament for a more equitable Repreſentation of the People is much more the general ſenſe of this County than the Petition laſt winter was, though ſigned by about 11,000 Freeholders. This acceſſion of ſtrength may be in part aſcribed to the diſtracted ſtate of our national counſels, which hardly could have taken place in the dangerous degree we now experience, if the People were fairly repreſented. The evil is grown alike formidable to the Crown, and to the Body of the Nation, and loudly calls upon the Friends of both to exert themſelves in other parts of the Kingdom, as they have

have done in Yorkſhire, effectually to reſtrain that evil, by reſtoring to the People at large their due aſcendant over the Repreſentative Aſſembly. Till that be done, we can hardly expect any ſtability in our Government on principles that will be ſafe to the community. Power will probably continue to fluctuate between the Crown and the Ariſtocracy, and the Nation muſt not only ſuſtain the preſent miſchiefs reſulting from this inſtability of Government, but alſo hazard the infinitely greater calamities to which that fluctuation evidently tends.—I ought, perhaps, to apologize for entering ſo largely into this ſubject, in a Letter addreſſed to a Gentleman to whom I have not the honour to be perſonally known, though I had the ſatisfaction to find, on a former occaſion, that our ſentiments on the great queſtion of Political Reformation were nearly the ſame; but, in times like theſe, no public good can be accompliſhed without venturing, in ſome degree, to exceed the uſual forms of correſpondence. By this motive alone have I been induced to treſpaſs upon your leiſure, by declaring thus fully and freely my ſentiments to you. I flatter myſelf, from the ſimilarity of our opinions in an earlier ſtage of this buſineſs, theſe ſentiments are not widely different from your own: I believe I may add, they are nearly the ſame with thoſe which are entertained by that Body of Independent Gentlemen in Yorkſhire with whom I have had the honour to co-operate for ſeveral years.

I ſhould be happy to hear, Sir, that the Proceedings at the two late Meetings of the County of York are approved by you and your Friends in Derbyſhire, and that you find your County better diſpoſed to ſupport an application to Parliament for *a more Equal Repreſentation* of the People, than it was ſome time ago. The favour of your anſwer will find me at No. 26, Edward-Street, Portman-Square, London.*

I am, Sir, with great reſpect,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Letter *from* F. N. C. MUNDY, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I HAVE received your favour of the 24th of laſt month, and have waited ſome time in hopes of having it in my power to inform you of a diſpoſition in this part of the County of Derby towards a renewal of our Petition to Parliament for a Reform in the National Repreſentation. I am ſorry to ſay, that from various cauſes at preſent I ſee nothing like it, and I could not longer defer my acknowledgments of the honour you have done me by

* A Duplicate of this Letter, with ſome ſlight variations, was ſent to Charles Brandling, Eſq; and ſome other Gentlemen.

your

your moſt obliging letter. I cannot more ſtrongly expreſs my reſpect for the Gentlemen of the County of York, and their proceedings, in endeavouring to obtain a Parliamentary Reform, than by aſſuring you of my wiſhes to ſee their example imitated in this and in all other Counties. I ſhall be happy, ſhould a proper opportunity occur, to co-operate, on conſtitutional principles, with the body of worthy and independent Gentlemen, of ſimilar ſentiments in this neighbourhood, towards promoting ſuch a meaſure, the attainment of whoſe object grows every day more manifeſtly and more abſolutely neceſſary.* I am, Sir,

With very great reſpect,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

F. N. C. MUNDY.

Feb. 5, 1784.

Paper V.

* The diſpute between the Houſe of Commons and the other branches of the Legiſlature, occaſioned by the attempt, about this time, to deſtroy the Chartered Rights of the India Company, was carried on with a degree of heat and violence which excited a general alarm. In the courſe of this ſtruggle it ſoon became viſible, that the opinion of the Public was on the ſide of the Crown and the Peers. Yet the coaleſced Party, probably miſguided by Mr. Burke, the reputed Author of their Coalition, perſevered in the obnoxious meaſure, till the Crown, emboldened by Addreſſes from every part of the Kingdom, at laſt ventured to diſſolve the Parliament, and appeal to the People againſt their Repreſentatives. The reſult was, in its immediate effect, favourable to Conſtitutional Liberty; the danger apprehended from an Oligarchal Junto, in whoſe hands the immenſe patronage of India was to be placed, was indeed averted; but hence the Crown was enabled to lull the jealouſy of the People, gradually to recover a more extended influence than it had loſt, and finally to obtain that deciſive ſuperiority, which has annihilated Oppoſition, and while it preſerved the forms, has nearly deſtroyed the ſubſtance of the Conſtitution. The oppoſition of the Public to the obnoxious meaſure was right and neceſſary; but their confidence in the new Miniſter of the Crown

Paper V.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL; *communicating* Reſolutions, *&c. by the* QUINTUPLE ALLIANCE.

Dear Wyvill,

OUR Secretary being otherwiſe engaged, I act in his place to ſend you, as Chairman of the Yorkſhire Committee, the following Reſolutions.

If copies of this, or a ſimilar plan of Aſſociation, were diſperſed in different pariſhes, and a book provided in each pariſh, to receive the ſignatures of ſuch as might approve, the cauſe would be greatly ſerved thereby.

I wiſh you all ſucceſs in your exertions; the conduct of the Coalitioniſts is ſo fundamentally wrong, that with the fulleſt perſuaſion of no very good intentions in ſome near the Throne, I moſt cordially wiſh intire rout to the party of Fox, Burke, and North.

Crown was unwary and exceſſive; and, in the courſe of his long Adminiſtration, it has been productive of fatal effects.

To thoughtful and virtuous men how melancholy is this retroſpect! How dangerous are thoſe defects in the Conſtitution, which in 1784 ſo nearly produced a diſſolution of Government! If, under the circumſtances then exiſting, Reform appeared to this worthy Patriot ſo abſolutely neceſſary, how are the arguments for it increaſed to tenfold force, by the ſtate to which the Conſtitution has been reduced by Mr. Pitt in 1802.

England,

England, if expiring, could never be benefited by such men.*

Your's affectionately,

JOHN JEBB.

PARLIAMENT STREET,
23d *May*, 1784.

* Of the Constitution of this Society, which quaintly termed itself "The Quintuple Alliance," the Editor knows nothing with certainty. But his belief is, that it was composed of persons, inhabitants of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Town of Southwark, and the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey, who had signed the Association communicated by Dr. Jebb, and printed in the following Paper.

If this supposition were the fact, the Friends of Moderate Reform could not, on any strong grounds of reason, expect that their objects would be promoted by a Body so constituted. The formation of a Society collected from the population of these five Districts, into one immense Assembly, was likely to create disgust and alarm, from the novelty and irregularity of the measure; from the natural tendency of such prodigious Assemblies to confusion and violence; and from the want of any limitation of the nature of a compromise, in the Plan of the Association respecting a Reform in the Representation.—The Editor, therefore, though he felt a high respect for the talents and integrity of Dr. Jebb, was yet apprehensive that they were misdirected on this occasion, and could not participate in the joy and confidence expressed by his Friend.

On the maturest consideration, after so many years have elapsed, the Editor, on any future emergency, would most earnestly deprecate the formation of any new Association on a similar model. It is the interest of the Nation to preserve internal Peace, and to secure its Constitutional Rights. Let the measures of the Friends of Reform be uniformly governed by a strict regard for these two great National Objects, and ultimate success will probably crown their exertions.

No Answer to Dr. Jebb's Letter has been preserved.

Paper VI.

Paper VI. *

Reſolutions *and* Form *of* Aſſociation *adopted at* Two Meetings *of the* QUINTUPLE ALLIANCE.

QUINTUPLE ALLIANCE, LONDON.

PAUL'S HEAD TAVERN,
Catteton-Street, February 10, 1784.

Sir BARNARD TURNER, Knt. in the Chair.

Reſolved,

1. THAT Freedom is the birth-right of mankind, derived from the Author of their being, and of which no power upon earth, much leſs a delegated power, hath a right to deprive them.

2. That the preſent imperfect Repreſentation, and long duration of Parliaments, are grievances of the firſt magnitude, and require the interference of the collective body of the People, in order to their Reform.

3. That it is eſſential to the cauſe of Public Freedom, that all ranks and orders of men ſhould unite and aſſociate in favour of a ſubſtantial Reform in the Repreſentation of the Commons. And that this, or any Adminiſtration, will deſerve the ſupport and confidence of the Country in proportion to the zeal with which they ſhall bring forward and endeavour to carry into effect that ſalutary meaſure.

The

The following Form of Aſſociation was read, and entered into a book, in order to receive the ſignatures of ſuch as ſhould approve it.

" Convinced that neither King, Peers, nor People, can be ſecure in the enjoyment of any franchiſe, privilege, or prerogative whatſoever, unleſs an Houſe of Commons conſtitutionally elected, and continuing in Power for a Conſtitutional Term, ſhall make a part of the Legiſlature of this Country; and knowing that a fair Repreſentation, together with ſhort Parliaments, are the birth-right of Engliſhmen, we the underwritten do aſſociate for the purpoſe of obtaining a proper extenſion of the violated Right of Suffrage, a more Equal Repreſentation, and Parliaments of Short Duration; and being determined never to abandon Rights ſo ſacred and ſo eſſential to our very exiſtence as a Free People, we do deliberately and ſolemnly pledge ourſelves to each other and to our Country, to co-operate with our Fellow-Citizens throughout Great-Britain, in every juſt and conſtitutional exertion, to recover and ſecure thoſe Rights."

QUINTUPLE

QUINTUPLE ALLIANCE, LONDON.

PAUL's HEAD TAVERN,
Cateaton-Street, March 16, 1784.

Sir WATKIN LEWES, Knt. in the Chair.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

1. THAT the repeated rejection of the equitable propoſition for the appointment of a Select Committee of the Houſe of Commons, to inquire into the ſtate of Parliamentary Repreſentation, and to report to the Houſe, evinces more forcibly than the ſtrongeſt language the neceſſity of a Reform in the Repreſentation of the People.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

2. That the Form of Aſſociation, which was produced at the laſt Meeting, and then received the ſignatures of many reſpectable Individuals, be recommended by this Alliance to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain, as a proper Form of a General Aſſociation for reſtoring the Conſtitution.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

3. That the Secretary be deſired to ſend Copies of the Form of Aſſociation to the different Committees, and other Public Bodies appointed for the purpoſe of promoting Parliamentary Reform.

Reſolved

Reſolved unanimouſly,

4. That this Alliance behold, with heart-felt ſatisfaction, the exertions of the Friends of Liberty in Ireland and Scotland in favour of a Parliamentary Reform: That we conjure them to perſevere with unabated ſpirit and united energy in the Common Cauſe of Freedom, actuated by the animating perſuaſion of the juſtice of the cauſe, and under a full conviction that in the collective Body of the People is veſted both the authority and the power to effect complete redreſs, and that by their exertions only it can be obtained.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

5. That it be recommended to the Electors of Counties and Cities, compoſing this Alliance, not to give their ſuffrage and ſupport to any Candidate who ſhall not, in the moſt unequivocal terms, pledge himſelf to uſe his utmoſt endeavours to reſtore Parliaments to their ancient and primitive conſtitution, i. e. the practice of frequent and new Parliaments, and to promote a more Equal Repreſentation of the People in the Commons Houſe of Parliament.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

6. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Members of the Houſe of Commons who ſupported the laſt motion for a Committee

Committee to inquire into the ſtate of the Repreſentation of the People.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

7. That the Form of Aſſociation, recommended by this Meeting, lie at the Paul's Head Tavern, Cateaton-Street, for ſignature.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

8. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Watkin Lewes, for his polite and candid conduct in the Chair.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

9. That the preceding Reſolutions be printed in the Public Papers.

Reſolved unanimouſly,

10. That this Alliance adjourn to this day four weeks.

T. H. BURLEY OLDFIELD,
Secretary.

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

Letter *from* PEMBERTON MILNES, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

IT has been ſtated to me that a Letter from you was read at a Meeting at Sheffield, upon the ſubject of calling this County together; but as I cannot learn the exact tendency thereof, I wiſh much to have your real ſentiments thereupon as ſoon as poſſible. I wiſh our Committee of Aſſociation would hold to their original plan of Parliamentary Reform, and not meddle in political matters that they never aſſociated about.

I am with great regard,
Dear Sir,
Your's very truly,
PEMBERTON MILNES.

WAKEFIELD,
March 6th, 1784.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* Pemberton Milnes, Eſq.

London, *March 9th*, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I DO not know what Letter of mine you allude to, in your favour of the 6th inſt. as having been read at a late Meeting at Sheffield, conſequently I cannot pretend to recollect what might be the ſentiments expreſſed in it. But I have not the ſmalleſt objection to declare to you my opinion on the ſubject of a County Meeting at this critical moment; on the contrary, I hold myſelf bound in duty to give an explicit anſwer to that, or any political queſtion you may have occaſion to put to me.

When diſputes unhappily ariſe between the Houſe of Commons and either of the other two Branches of the Legiſlature, the only conſtitutional remedy for an evil, whoſe tendency is ſo exceedingly alarming, is a Diſſolution of Parliament; that is, an appeal to the ſenſe of the Nation at large. In the preſent very depraved ſtate of our Repreſentation, it muſt be owned the ſenſe of the Public cannot be aſcertained by the teſt of a General Election ſo clearly as it ought to be. But till a melioration of Parliament in that reſpect can be obtained, we muſt be content to uſe the only teſt we have; and if uſed in the preſent inſtance,

inſtance, it would probably prove effectual to decide the ſubſiſting diſpute between the Houſe of Commons, and the Crown, and the Houſe of Peers, with the leaſt poſſible damage to the Conſtitution.

With this view of the ſubject, I declared myſelf friendly to a Meeting of the County of York, when I was aſked my opinion of it ſeveral weeks ago. But as I underſtood at that time, from certain authority, that a treaty was on foot for an accommodation of thoſe diſſentions *, it ſeemed to me highly expedient to allow ſufficient time for carrying on and concluding ſuch negotiation; and to avoid calling the County of York together before a day at ſuch a diſtance as would, in all probability, determine whether a union could be effected or not. I therefore ſuggeſted my opinion to ſeveral Gentlemen on this head, pointing to a day near to that which I have ſince underſtood was intimated to the High Sheriff by the Gentlemen who ſigned the Requiſition, as a convenient time for holding the Meeting which they had requeſted him to call.

* This alludes to an attempt made to diſſolve the Coalition, and to re-unite with the Miniſter and his Friends thoſe Members of the Coaleſced Body who had formerly been connected with them in oppoſition to Lord North. If this attempt had been ſucceſsful, the Nation would have been gratified by the excluſion of Lord North and his Adherents from power; and the accompliſhment of a moderate, but ſubſtantial Reform of Parliament, probably would have been the happy conſequence of a Re-union of the Whig Party. The failure of this attempt therefore was, in truth, a national misfortune.

As the Meeting on the 25th inſt. has been called by Perſons of all deſcriptions, whether Members of the Aſſociation or not, and as no previous Meeting of the Committee will probably be held, I hope the Committee cannot juſtly be blamed on this occaſion. And ſurely when we entered into our Aſſociation for the purpoſe of reforming certain groſs abuſes in the ſtate of Parliament, we never meant to preclude ourſelves from taking a part, either individually, or in great collective Meetings, on any other political queſtion on which our interpoſition might appear to be neceſſary or expedient.—I ſhould be happy to find that this undiſguiſed account of my ſentiments on this ſubject is ſatisfactory to you,

Being, with great regard,
Dear Sir,
Very truly your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper IX.

Paper IK.

Letter *from* General JOHN HALE *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

GUISBROUGH, *March 30th*, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I Could have wiſhed, for the ſake of peace, that the compoſition propoſed by the Gentlemen at Bluitt's had been agreeable to the Gentlemen aſſembled at the York Tavern, in which caſe I ſhould have given my vote to Mr. Foljambe and Mr. Duncombe, however I might have differed in opinion with the latter. But the rejection of that fair propoſal having put me under other circumſtances, and induced me to take a different part, I ſhall beg leave, by your means, to ſay a word to the Committee in explanation of my political conduct, which, though of little conſequence to the public, is of conſequence to me, inaſmuch as it relates to the propriety and conſiſtency of my actions; and, firſt, Sir, I conceive I am perfectly conſiſtent in approving that union of parties called the Coalition, having ſtrongly recommended that meaſure as long ago as the year 1781, in a Pamphlet with my name at the bottom of it; and next, Sir, with regard to the Yorkſhire Aſſociation I muſt obſerve, that it never was my intention to bind myſelf irrevocably and invariably to the letter of it, becauſe in ſuch a caſe I ſhould have bound myſelf to do, at all times,

and under all circumſtances, what at a particular time, and under particular circumſtances, might be neither proper nor expedient; ſuch a time has arrived, and ſuch circumſtances have ariſen, for at this very time I muſt either vote for two Candidates who have ſigned the Aſſociation, but whoſe Parliamentary conduct I do not approve, or I muſt vote for one Candidate, whoſe Parliamentary conduct I do approve, though he has not ſigned the Aſſociation. So circumſtanced, I take the latter party, which I have a right to do, reſerving to myſelf, upon any future occaſion, the right of ſupporting the ſpirit of the Aſſociation, without being a ſlave to the forms of it in the preſent inſtance. I flatter myſelf I ſhall not ſuffer in the opinion of the Committee for adhering to my own, however it may differ from that of Gentlemen with whom I have long acted, and with whom I ſhall be happy to act again, whenever a more comprehenſive Coalition ſhall have united the different Parties of this diſtracted Country.*

I have the honour to be,

With great eſteem,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

J. HALE.

To the Rev. Mr. Wyvill,
Chairman *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.
YORK.

Paper X.

* About this time, conſiderable difference of opinion had ariſen among the Members of the Yorkſhire Committee, reſpecting the recent Coalition, and its unpopular attempt to deſtroy the Chartered

Paper X.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* General John Hale.

Burton-Hall, *Auguſt 5th*, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I RECEIVED the favour of your Letter, dated March 30th, for which I ought to have returned my acknowledgments long ago. It has preſſed upon my mind ever ſince, with great uneaſineſs; but the honeſt truth was, I have been at a loſs what anſwer to give. And now, all I can ſay with propriety is, that

tered Rights of the India Company. The Seceſſion of a conſiderable Minority of the Committee was the conſequence of this diſſention, on the day on which this Letter was written; and after ſo many reſpectable Members had withdrawn themſelves from that Body, it was never thought expedient to ſummon a Meeting of that Majority who ſtill remained united, under the appointment of the County of York. The laſt Meeting of the Committee was held on the 2d of January, 1784.

On this difference of opinion, and the conſequent Seceſſion from the Committee, the Editor would avoid every unpleaſant comment. For the only ſurvivor of his three earlieſt political Friends, the worthy General Hale, and for many others of the Seceding Members, he feels the moſt cordial eſteem and regard. Except upon the occaſions here alluded to, their ſentiments on the ſtate of the Public have been ſimilar, and their oppoſition to the wars with America and the Republic of France, and their efforts to ſecure Public Liberty by a moderate Reform, have been marked with the ſame zeal with which their political exertions commenced.

But if this ſchiſm in the Committee in 1784 was a ſerious misfortune to the cauſe of Reform, the Seceſſion from the doctrines of Reform, and the principles of Conſtitutional Liberty which took place in Yorkſhire in 1795, is ſtill more to be lamented. Almoſt infinite are the calamities which have reſulted from it; and to that cauſe alſo may be imputed, in part, the dangers

I will take care to lay your Letter before the Committee at its next Meeting, which I hope will not be at a very diſtant period. As Chairman of the Committee, it is my duty to do that; but if I ſhould venture to do more, and to give my opinion on the ſubject of your Letter, I ſhould certainly exceed my duty, and might offend the Committee, without having the ſatisfaction to convince you.

The Seceſſion of ſo many reſpectable Gentlemen from that Body, on account of ſome oppoſition of ſentiment on ſubjects which have no neceſſary connection with the Aſſociation, muſt be lamented by every Friend to that plan of Reformation as one of the moſt unfavourable events which could poſſibly have

dangers which ſtill hang over this Country, and even in Peace diſturb and diſmay every thoughtful breaſt. Yet for the Seceders of this claſs, as for their Predeceſſors in 1784, it may be juſtly pleaded that they erred ſincerely. The conduct alluded to in 1795, and the ſubſequent years of the war, was the joint effect of an honeſt but exceſſive partiality for the Miniſter, and an overpowering alarm, which ſuppreſſed, for a time, their attachment to the genuine principles of the Conſtitution. But that partiality and that alarm ſeem to have loſt much of their influence. Time and further conſideration will probably free their minds from it completely; and when thoſe impreſſions have diſappeared, their ancient ſentiments will once more ariſe. They will recollect with ſatisfaction their former ſupport of the true doctrines of the Conſtitution, and again feel their boſoms glow with a ſpirit of prudent and rational Patriotiſm. And then ſome freſh Propoſal of a Political Reform, framed on the ſame moderate principles which they before approved, and cautiouſly confined to the ſame regular and pacific means which they before employed, by their renewed ſupport may happily be accompliſhed.

It is perhaps ſuperfluous to obſerve, that this Letter by General Hale, and that by Sir Watts Horton, viz. Paper XV. of this Number, are conſidered to be Public Letters. They appear to have been intended for the inſpection of the Committee; and if that Body had ever met again, it would have been the duty of the Chairman to lay them before it.

happened.

happened. Knowing your hearty zeal to promote the extenſion of Popular Privileges, I think the loſs which the Committee has ſuſtained by your ſeparation from it, is more peculiarly to be regretted than that perhaps of any other Member.

But from what you have ſaid towards the concluſion of your Letter, there ſeems to be ſome ground to hope we may be honoured with your aſſiſtance, whenever it may be thought adviſable to bring forward the buſineſs of Parliamentary Reformation.

I am, dear Sir, with great reſpect,
Your moſt faithful
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper XI.

Letter *from* THOMAS ARTHINGTON, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

AS an inconſiderable Individual of your Political Flock, though one of the moſt zealous for Parliamentary Reformation, I wiſh to apologize for my non-attendance at York, by aſſuring you, as I had the honour of telling you in Town, that I am not yet able to make up my mind ſo far, as on account of ſome probable enormities on the part of the Majority of the late Houſe of Commons,

mons, to approve of ſuch treatment from the other Branches of the Legiſlature, as cannot fail of depreſſing the only Body that can with any pretence to propriety be called the Repreſentation of the People, and which if made really ſo by the wiſhed-for wholeſome regulations, will find themſelves much ſunk in the eye of the Public, who now ſeem to rejoice at their now (poſſibly merited) degradation.

The young Miniſter's creation of Peers from among the Monopolizers of rotten, and to them ſubſervient Boroughs, ſeems to me not to be in any adequate degree counteracted by the ſolitary vote he lately gave.

So undecided, I think myſelf beſt here. I flatter myſelf that Recollection on the conſequences of an angry conteſt will enſure the Meeting advertiſed for next Friday to agree to the re-election of Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Foljambe. I ſhould think myſelf greatly blameable under ſuch indeciſion was I to write to any perſon I might be ſuppoſed to influence. I am apprehenſive that the communication of the reveries of ſo obſcure an Individual as myſelf, may partake of the nature of preſumption. However, I wiſh not to conceal my ſentiments, as they are not lightly taken up, and what I thought, from the confidence you have honoured me with, proper to be communicated by me to yourſelf.

I am, dear Sir, with much regard,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

THO. ARTHINGTON.

CHARLOTTE-STEET,
BEDFORD SQUARE,
30*th March*, 84.

Paper XII.

Paper XII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* THOMAS ARTHINGTON, Eſq.

YORK, *April 5th*, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I AM extremely obliged by your very friendly communication, and own the doubts you expreſs are thoſe which may eaſily occur to one who is, like yourſelf, a warm Friend to the Liberties of the People. I ſhall frankly tell you, in a few words, my ſolution of the difficulty, which, if it ſhould not appear to you as ſatisfactory as it does to me, I am perfectly convinced you will think of me, as I now do you of you, that to purſue what appears moſt ſafe for the People, has been on this occaſion the object really in view.—My opinion then is briefly this: The Man who wanted the Patronage of the Indies, wanted to govern by Corruption. If for that purpoſe ſuch a fund could have been obtained, the abuſes we think ſo dangerous would have been ſupported by a Government too ſtrong to be reſiſted. I therefore cannot help thinking the intereſts of Liberty require us to ſupport the preſent Miniſter, becauſe were he driven from his poſt, the India Bill, with ſome modification, would be forced through the forms of the Legiſlature, and Reforma-

tion

tion would be for ever defeated. On the other ſide, by ſupporting the Miniſter againſt the Houſe of Commons in the peculiar circumſtances of the preſent caſe, only till an appeal can be made to the People, the Addreſſers ſeem to me to have guarded ſufficiently againſt any dangerous miſapplication of the precedent. At the ſame time I am free to own, if the ſenſe of the new Parliament ſhould be againſt the Miniſter, I think in that caſe he ought to retire; becauſe on an appeal to the People, the deciſion being againſt him, the Conſtitution affords no other reſort for ending ſuch diſputes.

I have not the vanity to think this view of the matter will alter your opinion, which I know has been founded on much conſideration of the ſubject. I only mean to exhibit freely to you what has induced me to take part with thoſe who reſiſt the late meaſures of the Houſe of Commons.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

C. WYVILL.

Paper XIII.

Paper XIII.

Letter *from* F. F. FOLJAMBE, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

AS I have withdrawn my name from the Aſſociation, I think it neceſſary to aſſure you, that, with regard to the Reform of Parliament, my ſentiments are fully and preciſely the ſame, and that in whatever ſtation of life I may be, I ſhall give it my moſt cordial ſupport. At the ſame time may I flatter myſelf that this ſtep will not be conſidered as in any manner diſreſpectful to a Body of Gentlemen with whom I have, for ſome time, acted, and to whoſe views of Reform I ſtill continue the ſame zealous friend. With regard to yourſelf, give me leave to return you my beſt thanks for the kindneſs you have ſhewn me, and the candour with which you have treated my conduct in Parliament. I ſincerely aſſure you that I retain the ſame reſpect and regard, and ſhall always be happy in teſtifying how much I am

Your moſt obedient
and very humble ſervant,
F. F. FOLJAMBE. *

YORK, *March* 31, 1784.

Paper XIV.

* The caſe reſpecting this Gentleman and his Conſtituents may thus be ſtated, as the Editor believes, with ſufficient accuracy.—With many amiable qualities in private life, but without Sir G. Savile's ſuperiority of talents, or his devoted zeal for Civil and Religious

Paper XIV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* F. F. Foljambe, Esq.

York Tavern, *April* 1, 1784.

Sir,

FEW things could have given me greater uneaſineſs than the difference of political opinion which has lately taken place between us. From a grateful ſenſe of Sir G. Savile's meritorious conduct, and a good opinion of your public principles, particularly reſpecting the eſſential articles of Parliamentary Reformation, I took an early and an active part in your late Election. But I muſt freely own to

Religious Liberty, his Nephew poſſeſſed the merit, as the Yorkſhire Gentlemen judged it, of having joined them in their deteſtation of the ſyſtem of corruption, and their efforts to check or deſtroy it. On the too viſible decline of their revered Patriot's health, they would have looked in vain for a ſucceſſor of equal virtues and equal ability to ſerve the County. But what was next to be wiſhed, they hoped to find in his Nephew, viz. a Repreſentative faithful to the cauſe of Liberty, anxious to preſerve union between the Nobles and the great body of his Conſtituents, yet ſtill more anxious to ſupport their Principles, and maintain their Honour and Independence. To thoſe expectations was added the more powerful motive of gratitude, which prompted them to give to their expiring Patriot this laſt proof of their love and veneration. That motive decided their choice of Mr Foljambe, and Sir G. Savile lived but to receive the information. If Mr. Foljambe ſoon forfeited their confidence, candid men at this diſtance of time will recollect the extreme difficulty of his ſituation, and excuſe his error. If his Conſtituents were miſguided, and diſappointed in their choice, yet ſtill it will be remembered, that tho' diſappointed, they were not diſgraced; though miſled, it was by a ſenſe of gratitude which did honour to themſelves, as to their late virtuous Repreſentative.

you

you, that the meaſures which I underſtand have ever ſince that period received your ſupport in Parliament, appear to me highly dangerous to the Peace and Liberty of the Community. I ſtill think well of your private character *; I ſtill venerate the memory of Sir G. Savile; but unleſs your public conduct, in the important inſtances above alluded to, ſhould be explained in a ſatisfactory manner at the intended Meeting of the County to-morrow, I ſhall feel myſelf bound by conſiderations of Public Good, infinitely ſuperior to any perſonal motives, to co-operate with thoſe Gentlemen by whom, in that caſe, your nomination will be oppoſed. †

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XV.

* The performance of his duty, on this occaſion, was not unattended by pain and anxiety to the Editor. His anſwer to Mr. Foljambe's Letter being of a public nature, and written at a moment of controverſy, was neceſſarily guarded, and very imperfectly expreſſed his high reſpect for Sir G. Savile, and his regret that the confidence ſo lately repoſed in his Nephew probably would be withdrawn.—On ſubſequent occaſions, long after this, he has been more at liberty, and has expreſſed his veneration of the great Patriot more completely as he felt it.

† On the next day, the conduct of Mr. Foljambe was not explained to the County in a ſatisfactory manner; in a few days more, a new Election came on, and he was ejected by an immenſe majority, to make room for Mr. Wilberforce.

That Mr. Wilberforce poſſeſſes very conſiderable talents, is univerſally acknowledged; but yet this choice was hardly more fortunate than the former, if it were ſtill the object of the County to elect a Repreſentative as public ſpirited, and as warmly attached

to

Paper XV.

Letter *from* Sir WATTS HORTON, Bart. *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

UPPER BROOK-STREET, 6*th April*, 1784.

Sir,

I TROUBLE you with a few lines to acquaint you with my ſentiments upon the preſent conteſt in Yorkſhire, aud to requeſt you will inform me whether the Gentlemen of the Aſſociation conſider the oppoſing of Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Wilberforce to be inconſiſtent with the principles of that Aſſociation. I am at preſent ignorant what is Mr. Weddel's opinion in regard to the Parliamentary Reform we aſſociated for the expreſs purpoſe of obtaining, and which I ſhall always conſider as one thing neceſſary for the ſecurity of the Liberty of this Country; but I cannot, conſiſtently with the duty I and every individual owe to his Country, abandon other principles which *I think more material*; I mean, ſupporting the dignity and authority of that moſt eſſential branch of the Conſtitution, the Repreſentative Body of the People of England, againſt the over-ſtrained Prerogative of the Crown. The preſent Miniſter ſeems, at leaſt, to be endeavouring to diminiſh, if not totally annihilate the dignity of

to the principles of Liberty, Civil and Religious, as Sir G. Savile. Yet Mr. Wilberforce, for ſeveral years, was extremely popular in Yorkſhire, and his humane exertions to put an end to the trade in Slaves, will long be remembered with high approbation.

the

the Houſe of Commons; I therefore can never give my intereſt to the Gentlemen who ſupport that Miniſter. Theſe, Sir, are my ſentiments, and if the Committee of Aſſociation are of opinion that I cannot with propriety ſupport Mr. Weddel and Mr. Foljambe whilſt my name is inrolled in that very reſpectable Society, I muſt, with the greateſt regret, requeſt that it may be withdrawn, at the ſame time aſſuring you that my wiſhes for that Reform are equally zealous as at the time when I had the honour of ſubſcribing the Propoſitions.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

WATTS HORTON.

The Rev. Chriſtopher Wyvill,
Chairman of the Committee
of Aſſociation of the County
of York.

Paper XVI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* Sir Watts Horton, Bart.

Burton-Hall, *April* 30, 1784.

Sir,

I DID not receive your favour of the 6th inſtant till ſome days after the late Election for this County. Perhaps, on this account, any anſwer to your queſtion may now be unneceſſary; at leaſt, I truſt, you will admit it as a ſufficient excuſe for having delayed my acknowledgments to this time.

I think it impoſſible that the Gentlemen of the Yorkſhire Aſſociation ſhould conſider the oppoſing of Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Wilberforce to be inconſiſtent with the principle of that Aſſociation. By the terms of that inſtrument we are certainly not bound to ſupport any particular Candidate who may happen to be agreeable to the Majority of the Aſſociated Gentlemen. On the contrary, we are perfectly at liberty to vote for any Candidate whatever who has ſatisfied us that he will ſincerely promote that Reformation of Parliament which is the object of the Aſſociation. But to a Candidate averſe to that Reformation, or whom we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe friendly to it, I do apprehend we cannot give our ſupport, without deviating from the plain engagements we have entered into. On the late occaſion, a Member of the Aſſociation might have voted for Mr. Fol-

jambe

jambe in perfect conſiſtency with truth and honour; but if Mr. Weddel is an enemy to the meaſures of the Aſſociation, I own I do not ſee how voting for him could be reconciled to either, by thoſe who ſtand pledged as we do. I do aſſure you no perſon more ſincerely than myſelf wiſhed a breach of the popular party might be avoided. Many good Friends to Civil Liberty are now ranged on oppoſite ſides, and before they can be united again it is very poſſible the proſpect of Reformation may be cloſed. But ſince a breach could not be prevented, it appears to me that the general intereſts of Liberty, and thoſe of Reformation more eſpecially, require us to ſupport the men now in power, who have reſiſted meaſures that, in my conception, would have introduced Corruption to a degree of profligacy which this Country had never ſeen, and would, in fact, have changed our limited Monarchy into a mere Ariſtocratical Republic. In this opinion, tho' I agree with the greater part of the Committee, I have yet the misfortune to differ from you and many other Gentlemen whom I highly reſpect. But I hope this difference of ſentiment on one point needs not to prevent our continuing to act together on others on which we think alike, and whoſe importance we both admit to be very great.* I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

* In the ſixteen Papers of this Number are laid before the Reader the whole of the Editor's Correſpondence which has been preſerved, and

and which contains any material information reſpecting thoſe unpopular meaſures, the Coalition, and its propoſed Bill for the reſumption of the Charter of the India Company. Conſidering the impropriety of that heterogeneous Union, and the danger that would have reſulted from a Precedent for reſuming Chartered Rights, without a legal conviction of abuſes, the Editor *now* ſees no reaſon to qualify or retract the ſentiments he formerly expreſſed. On the contrary, he has, perhaps, cenſured each of theſe meaſures with greater freedom, and expreſſed greater ſatisfaction at the defeat of that Bill, in the Notes annexed to theſe Letters, than in any of his Letters or Public Speeches. He fears not, however, that the honeſt expreſſion of his ſentiments on theſe meaſures can be thought inconſiſtent with that high reſpect for a retired Statesman which in publications of a recent date he has with equal honeſty avowed †. The meaſures of Mr. Fox, during his connection with Sir G. Savile, were highly favourable to Liberty, and tended to pomote Political Rectitude: ſome of his meaſures during his Coalition with Lord North, had a tendency directly oppoſite. Had he died about this time, therefore, his character would have been left undeveloped; and from his parliamentary conduct it might have been conſidered an undeterminable queſtion, whether his great talents had been employed more for the good of his Fellow-men, or to their diſadvantage. Fortunately for his Country, his life has been prolonged, and the experience of the laſt eighteen years has fixed his character, and ſtamped it with the praiſe of virtuous conſiſtency. His uncommon powers of oratory, the accuracy of his logic, and the extent of his views as a Philoſophic Statesman, have commanded the applauſe even of his Adverſaries. But theſe great talents form but a claim to ſubordinate commendation: his proud diſtinction is, that he has made that uſe of them which Patriotiſm and the Public Good required.

Sir G. Savile, the virtuous Friend of Mr. Fox, had paſſed his youth and early manhood in retirement in the Country. Hence, perhaps, the purity of his Public Character; hence his diſintereſted attachment to the Cauſe of Liberty and the happineſs of his Fellow-men; hence the generous zeal with which he devoted himſelf, his time, his abilities, and his utmoſt means to the ſervice of the Public. But the youth and early manhood of Mr. Fox were paſſed in other ſcenes; his youth in gay diſſipation, his early manhood in political ſtruggles directed to no ſingle end. With a yielding facility of temper, he varied his purſuit as the times and his connections differed; now guided by the ſenſe of juſtice, and his patriotic zeal; now miſled by an ordinary ambition, and the lures of Power. At laſt, by the force of circumſtances, and his own powerful mind, he was enabled to form in himſelf a noble character. He renounced the errors of his youth; he ſubdued the faſcinations of Power; and, like his Patriot Friend, he de-

† See "The Seceſſion Vindicated," and the "Letter to John Cartwright, Eſq."

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voted himſelf to his Country and to Liberty with diſintereſted zeal. Still more to fix and confirm this honourable reſolution, he paſſed his mature age where the youth of his Friend had been ſpent, in a peaceful retirement in the Country; and ſeldom has he emerged from it, but on ſome great occaſion, to plead the Cauſe of his Country.

How would Sir George Savile, were he ſtill living, exult in this change! How would he applaud the force and generoſity of mind by which it was effected! How would he confide in the fortitude and wiſdom of our Patriot Statesman, and truſt, even in theſe deplorable times, that by his perſeverance National Liberty might yet be ſaved.

NUMBER XXXVII.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL TOOKER, Eſq.

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST. JAMES'S,
December 6th, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE juſt returned from a long converſation with Mr. Pitt, and it is with infinite ſatisfaction I aſſure you, that the proſpect of ſucceſs in the next Seſſion is beyond what our moſt ſanguine hopes could have figured. I never doubted his ſincerity, or his attachment to the Conſtitution; but if I were at liberty to mention what paſſed this morning, you would think almoſt any expreſſions I could employ in ſpeaking of his truly patriotic and diſintereſted views, fell ſhort of his deſerts.

As to the ſubject of a County Meeting at York, I own my ſentiments remain unaltered: I think we ſhall not do juſtice to the great cauſe we have embarked in, if we ſuffer many months to paſs away without endeavouring to obtain one. But whether it would be adviſable

viſable to call a Meeting before Mr. Pitt's Motion is made, or after it, is with me a matter of doubt. When I can form any clear opinion on the ſubject, I will in confidence mention it to you. In the mean-time, if you are at all inclined to think I am in the right on this ſubject of a County Meeting, I would beg to ſuggeſt to you, that no time ſhould be loſt in trying to animate the Independent Part of the County to give ſuch a meaſure their ſupport, beginning with hints thrown out in converſation, &c. that it is highly probable ſuch an attempt will be made in the courſe of this winter, and that there is a conviction in the minds of ſeveral of your friends that it is neceſſary to make it, both on account of public duty, and a due regard alſo to their own character and conſiſtency. As I ſhall write to Mr. Maſon, Mr. Shore, Mr. Duncombe, &c. by this evening's poſt, I will only add, I ſhall have the ſatisfaction of farther converſation with Mr. Pitt on Wedneſday, when I imagine he will communicate more fully the ideas according to which he means to frame his intended propoſition on the ſubject of Reformation. In great haſte,

Believe me
Ever moſt faithfully
And cordially your's,
C. WYVILL.

P.S. I ſhall ſtay here only till Friday morning; therefore I fear I cannot hear from you unleſs you write by the return of the poſt.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Dec. 8th*, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I AM juſt come back from my ſecond interview with Mr. Pitt, altogether as ſatisfactory as the firſt. But as I muſt write many Letters to Friends in different parts of Yorkſhire this evening and the next, I will add, in two lines only, that I am more than ever convinced of the abſolute neceſſity for a vigorous exertion in Yorkſhire to do juſtice to the noble reſolution of Mr. Pitt, from whom every thing honourable, every thing becoming a truly diſintereſted Patriot, in my opinion, may be juſtly expected. In this perſuaſion I am ready to co-operate, to the utmoſt of my power, with you and the other virtuous Friends with whom I am proud to have acted ſo long, and ſhall feel every ſuppoſable degree of fatigue or inconvenience to be beneath a moment's conſideration, if our exertions in concert may contribute to the ſucceſs of this great and neceſſary undertaking. *

Believe me ever,

My dear Mr. Maſon,

Moſt cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

* To avoid repetition the letter written to Mr. Maſon, &c. on the 6th of December, 1784, is omitted; it is in ſubſtance the ſame as the Letter to Mr. Tooke of that date. For a ſimilar reaſon

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL TOOKER, Esq.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Dec.* 14*th*, 1784.

My Dear Sir,

I THINK there is ſo much probability that a Meeting of the County of York will be held this winter, that I do not intend going abroad till that point is aſcertained. From my former letter you may have thought by this time I had croſſed the channel. I therefore beg the favour to hear from you at this place what is doing, or likely to be done by you and the good friends of the cauſe in your neighbourhood. I have juſt received a note * from the Duke of Richmond, out of Suſſex, declaring his ſentiments perfectly agree with Mr. Pitt's,

reaſon ſome other Letters will be omitted in this Number which are of a ſubſequent date; and which can be omitted without ſuppreſſing any material information reſpecting the tranſactions which produced the Meeting of the County of York in 1785.

* His Grace's note was preſerved for many years by the Editor; but at laſt, it was thrown into the fire, in a moment of diſguſt, after he had read his exculpatory ſpeech to the Houſe of Lords. In that ſpeech, as it was ſtated to the Public, the Duke of Richmond repreſented himſelf to have ſupported the popular demand of Reformation during the War with America, "not that Parliament might be reformed, but that the cloſe of the American War might be accelerated." The Editor will forbear to make any comment on this ſpeech.

He will only add that, ſoon after the date of this letter he had a conference with the Duke on the ſubject of Mr. Pitt's intended motion for reforming the Repreſentation, and at that time his Grace appeared to be perfectly ſincere, and determined to co-operate with Mr. Pitt to the utmoſt of his power.

Mr. Pitt's, in reſpect to what are the moſt adviſable means of effecting a Parliamentary Reform; by which I underſtand his Grace to mean, among other things, the propriety of ſtruggling to get as many County Meetings as poſſible to declare in our favour.

I am, ever,

Dear Sir,

Moſt cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* HENRY DUNCOMBE, Eſq.

NEROT's HOTEL, *Dec.* 14*th*, 1784.

My Dear Sir,

I OWN I think the inaction which you recommend, tends only to lay the Queſtion of Reformation aſleep. Such hardy meaſures, as making a change in the Legiſlature of our Country, appear to me to require a much more vigorous and hardy ſupport, and I am willing, for one, to give it; but though I argue ſtrenuouſly againſt what I deem the fatal tendency of *languid counſels*, or what you would chooſe to call by the more reputable term of *prudent and cautious advice*; yet be aſſured I cannot have one moment's doubt, that if you ſaw the conſequences of that *languid*, or of that *cautious conduct*, call it which you pleaſe,

pleaſe, in the ſame light as I do, as putting an end to all hope of Political Reformation till ſome freſh and extraordinary national calamity ſhall once more rouſe the Nation to a ſenſe of its danger, and the true means of extrication, you would as earneſtly as myſelf deprecate the miſtaken policy of being inactive at this moſt critical period. Be aſſured, though I argue with zeal for what I think the true way to promote the end we both have equally in view; yet different as your ſentiments may ſtill remain, I can have no more doubt of your ſtaunch and ſincere attachment to the cauſe, than I can have of my own, or of any other perſon who is, if poſſible, more deſirous of obtaining a powerful ſupport to Mr. Pitt's intended motion. In the next place, be aſſured, there is much more reaſon than you ſeem to apprehend, for believing that many perſons of the Fitzwilliam Party will warmly ſupport a County Meeting for the ſingle purpoſe of promoting a Reform, without intermixing any Reſolutions of a party nature, (i. e. in their idea tending to give ſtrength or credit to the Adminiſtration of Mr. Pitt) and alſo, many perſons lately connected with us, who, in conſequence of the ſpirited declaration Mr. Pitt authoriſes me to make of his intention to ſupport Reform to the utmoſt of his power, both *as a Man* and *a Miniſter*, will undoubtedly give their ſupport to a County Meeting. It is needleſs to particularize, on ſuch an occaſion, though in the former caſe I could mention ſeveral perſons of weight who have

have promiſed me their attendance at a County Meeting. After all, I intreat you, and thoſe other friends whom I moſt ſincerely reſpect, but who may think I preſs this meaſure with an imprudent warmth, to be aſſured that *this warmth* proceeds ſolely from a ſenſe of duty, and is perfectly conſiſtent with ſentiments of the higheſt eſteem and regard for thoſe who are of a different opinion. I think it right to explain and ſupport my own ſentiments; and having done that, I ſhall be moſt ready to acquieſce in that advice which ſhall appear to have the majority of our confidential friends in its favour.*

I am ever,
My dear Sir,
With the moſt ſincere
and cordial regard,
Your affectionate friend,
C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

* After the eighteen eventful years which have nearly paſſed ſince the date of this Letter, it is but juſtice to ſay, of this amiable man, and truly-diſintereſted Patriot, that his attachment to the cauſe of Conſtitutional Liberty has been invariable. In his temper mild and benevolent, in his principles firm and ſteady, in his political friendſhips warm and confidential, he long ſupported the adminiſtration of Mr. Pitt, but with the purity of his former Colleague, Sir George Savile. The change of ſyſtem reſpecting popular rights, which was begun by the Miniſter in 1792, the War with France in 1793, and the harſh meaſures of the two ſubſequent years, ſeem to have impreſſed his mind with doubts and apprehenſions, which gradually were converted by the increaſing rigour of the ſyſtem into diſguſt and alarm. At laſt near the end of 1795, the Miniſter with daring raſhneſs infringed that compact between the Monarch and his People, the Bill of Rights, which for more than a century had been deemed ſacred, as the very baſis of our Conſtitutional Rights; Mr. Henry Duncombe could bear no

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* R. S. MILNES, Esq.

Nanor's Horto, *Dec.* 16, 1784.

Dear Sir,

IT gave me pleasure to find you are among those Friends who have the courage to adopt the idea of a County Meeting. Not that I think we deserve any extraordinary praise for *venturing* to meet to support a measure which Government itself will propose, and which we have been for years endeavouring in vain to recommend to Government; but when many are languid and dispirited, it is some praise to be among the first who rouze from the general dejection. Since

no more; he protested against the infraction; but his conduct was misunderstood, and many of his former friends were too violently panic-struck by the discontent of the lower Classes of the People to guard the privileges of the Community with due firmness from the encroachments of Monarchal Power, or to estimate aright the value of their honest Representative's service. With the mildness of his native character, with the composure of conscious integrity, and with the regret of every consistent Friend to the Rights of the People, he yielded to the change of his Constituents opinion, and retired from Parliament.

At that time, it was the Editors advice and earnest wish that one effort might be made by Mr. H. Duncombe, by a public explanation of his conduct to the assembled Freeholders of Yorkshire, to re-animate them with that zeal for their constitutional Rights, which not long before had been the boasts of their character. But the delusion of his Constituents was too complete, and at his age the fatigues of the struggle which awaited him, would have been too severe, and probably would have been alike pernicious to himself and unavailing to the Public. It was, however, advised, given from the Editor's heart, with the sincerest fidelity to his ever-esteemed friend.

Since I wrote to you, and your reſpectable relation Mr. James Milnes, I have learnt from the Duke of Richmond, that there is a perfect agreement on the preſent occaſion, between him and Mr. Pitt, as to the moſt adviſable means of effecting a Reformation of Parliament; whence it may juſtly be concluded the Duke is ſatisfied Mr. Pitt's propoſitions are the beſt for the Liberty of the People which it is prudent to offer to Parliament. I am not at liberty to name them; but they are ſuch as appear to me likely to ſatisfy every reaſonable Friend to Reformation, and better far than I expected before my firſt interview with Mr. Pitt. It is high time, therefore, that we ſhould quit vain and deluſive hopes of carrying a Reform as liberal as our principles, or as effectual as our wiſhes; and that conſidering where the great difficulty lies, we ſhould exert ourſelves to collect the real Friends of Reformation, of whatever deſcription they may be in any other reſpect, and unite as ſoon as poſſible into one compact Body, at once able and determined to give that meaſure effectual ſupport. Such is the conduct in the nation at large, by which I truſt Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Camden, will be enabled to carry a very effectual Reform, though ſtill conſiderably ſhort of Theoretical Perfection. As to Yorkſhire, there it is the example muſt be ſet. Languid as our Friends are when it is generally known, what a bold declaration the Miniſter authorizes me to make of his determined

mined purpoſe to promote the great queſtion *honeſtly* and *reſolutely* to the utmoſt of his ſtrength, I doubt not they will feel a noble ardour in the Cauſe, and exert themſelves, like Engliſhmen, to ſecond the efforts of ſo truly Patriotic a Miniſter; juſtice *to him* as well as *to the Public*, and to *themſelves* requires this conduct of them; for, be aſſured, a Miniſter who makes ſuch an authentic declaration of his attachment to the popular cauſe, gives no common proof of *his courage*, and *his ſincerity*; and I ſhould be truly ſorry, if our Fellow-Countrymen in Yorkſhire did not feel *the merit*, and *the importance* of it, as I think it deſerves.—For reaſons which it is needleſs now to enumerate, I had doubted whether the Meeting ſhould be held before Mr. Pitt's Motion, or after it. I am now ſatisfied it will be prudent in Yorkſhire to meet before the end of January, i. e. while we have a Sheriff that will undoubtedly call the County together in the official manner, which many think material, though it is now well underſtood the Sheriff, on all ſuch occaſions, has no more right to interfere than any other perſon.

I believe you will find our good friends, Mr. Shore and Mr. Wilkinſon, ready to co-operate with you. I ſuppoſe the ſame of Mr. Tooker, Mr. Maſon, and Mr. Withers; becauſe, though I have not yet heard *from them*, I cannot doubt they will think Mr. Pitt's declaration

claration forms, as in truth it does, the very crisis of the cause. *

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your's cordially,

C. WYVILLE.

Paper VI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

Nanor's House, Dec. 18, 1784.

Dear Sir,

YOUR Letter, containing the joint opinions of yourself, Messrs. Shore, Wilkinson, Tooker, and Joseph Walker, against a General Meeting in the present temper of the County, convinces me that no such Meeting will be held at the time when such an effort would be most likely to make an impression on Parliament, and the Nation at large; I mean about the end of January, soon after the notice given by Mr. Pitt of the day when he will make his motion. I do not despair, however, that the temper of the County will become more favourable to our views, as the rectitude

* Of the disinterested patriotism of Mr. R. S. Milnes, it were superfluous here to bear the testimony of the Editor. But, on the long-continued friendship, on the general concurrence of their sentiments, and their cordial co-operation for many years in support of Constitutional Liberty, he reflects with pleasure, and gladly seizes this opportunity to declare it.

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of Mr. Pitt's intentions, and his ſincere attachment to the Cauſe of Reformation, are more generally underſtood. In the mean-time, I truſt that our Friends will avail themſelves of his late bold avowal of his intention to promote that cauſe to the utmoſt of his power, and will diligently endeavour, by giving it all poſſible publicity, to diſpoſe the County to a proper degree of zeal upon the ſubject.—Whether ten or fifteen Gentlemen of weight, coming to a bold reſolution at this moment to call the County together at the end of January, by requiſition to the preſent Sheriff, might not have been able by that time to inſpire the County with ſentiments ſimilar to their own, is a queſtion on which I no longer wiſh to preſs my opinion. I find, *in general*, the beſt Friends of the Cauſe, and thoſe for whoſe judgment I have the higheſt reſpect, conſider the attempt propoſed as too hardy a meaſure. Of courſe that attempt cannot take place; but though Gentlemen adopt the more cautious, or, if you pleaſe, the more prudent counſel, of not moving the County under the preſent diſadvantages, whoſe exiſtence even I admit, yet ſurely they will not decline attempting to remove thoſe diſadvantageous circumſtances, or think continued inactivity, at the very criſis of the buſineſs, is good policy, and conſequently that all endeavours to prepare the County for a General Meeting are improper, and fit only to be diſcouraged.

I will not trouble you, or my good Friends who are to meet at Aſton, and for whoſe in-

 ſpection

ſpection I mean this Letter, with a repetition of the arguments formerly uſed; but one conſideration there is, and a material one it ſeems to be, which I would beg to ſuggeſt. Much pains have been taken, and not without effect, to create doubts of Mr. Pitt's ſincerity in the Public mind. That ſuch impreſſions ſhould be received, is not at all ſurpriſing, when it is conſidered how often the People have been duped by Public Men, and that the Reformation of Parliament is as evidently againſt the intereſt of an *ordinary Miniſter* as it is for *the general good.*

To prevent theſe jealouſies diſcouraging the People, to the great diſadvantage of the Cauſe, Mr. Pitt has made every poſſible declaration, in Parliament and out of it, to convince them he is *in earneſt.* He has reſolved to ſupport the Reform to the utmoſt of his power, *as a Miniſter.* He has avowed to me that reſolution, and permits me to declare it. *More* he cannot ſay to prove his ſincerity, his zeal, and courage, as a Friend to Reformation; and when the time for action comes, it cannot reaſonably be doubted but that he will act in a manner ſuitable to theſe declarations. But, on the other hand, is it not natural to ſuppoſe that Mr. Pitt muſt be anxious to diſcover with what degree of zeal and effect the People are likely to ſupport him? And if ſome of the Cabinet ſhould ſtrenuouſly oppoſe, and a majority of the Houſe of Commons ſhould reſiſt his propoſitions, are there not many conceivable modes of greater and

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of greater efficacy ſtill, to which his late declaration cannot be conſtrued to extend, by which he might *then* reſolve to ſupport them, if he had any reaſonable aſſurance that the Public would ſtand by him, and that ſuch conduct might eventually enable him to carry the great meaſure? From ſuch a character as Mr. Pitt's, every thing *diſintereſted* and *nobly right* may be expected. But if no peculiar earneſtneſs, no great zeal for the queſtion ſhould appear even in thoſe parts of the kingdom that have been thought moſt attached to it, it would not be public ſpirited; it would be raſh and romantic to renounce, or even greatly to hazard the good he can do his Country, *for that good* however in itſelf of far greater importance, which, in that caſe, he would have no juſt probability to effect. That ſuch conſiderations may occur to Mr. Pitt, is certain, becauſe *you* have very juſtly remarked a ſimilar reaſon for caution on our part, not to expoſe him to that hazard. And if in ſome critical ſituation, which may eaſily be conceived, his conduct ſhould be governed by theſe conſiderations, as I think it ought, it might yet be perfectly conſiſtent with all his prior declarations. ——At preſent, Mr. Pitt ſtands in circumſtances particularly fortunate for the Cauſe. On the one hand, Mr. Fox, and almoſt all the able Men of the Ariſtocratical Party, have declared themſelves not only in favour of Reformation in general, but eſpecially for Mr. Pitt's plan, ſo far as the

principles of it were unfolded to Parliament in 1782. From them, therefore, no material oppoſition is to be dreaded. On the other hand, while the Ariſtocratical Party, with Mr. Fox at its head, continues its ſtrength, the Friends of Monarchy *abſolute*, or, at leaſt, *much more powerful* than *we ever wiſh to ſee it*, will be afraid to combat Mr. Pitt, even on this very important queſtion; if powerfully ſupported by the People, he muſt be able, in all probability, to carry ſomething very effectual. But then, let it be obſerved, all this entirely depends on his being appriſed, in good time that he will be ſupported. I have ſaid, the proſpect of ſucceſs was much improved, and ſo it certainly is; but as the People alone, againſt or without Government, cannot ſucceed, ſo neither can the Government alone, without the aid of the People. Upon the whole, I am convinced that the ſucceſs of this grand undertaking principally, if not wholly, depends on the efforts made by the People this winter; that other Communities, friendly to Reformation, look to Yorkſhire, as the Body expected to ſet the example of petitioning, as being the Body of greateſt weight, moſt ſpirited and uniform conduct, and whoſe propoſitions of Reform *nearly* are underſtood, from Mr. Pitt's former declarations in Parliament, to be the probable grounds of his intended motion. Although, therefore, I fear, from the delay that has occurred, you cannot well get a Meeting of the County before the preſent

preſent Sheriff will have quitted his office, yet I beg leave to repreſent once more to you, and our excellent worthy Friends in your quarter, my firm perſuaſion that inactivity during this winter, on the part of Yorkſhire, will really and truly be only a decent way of laying the queſtion aſleep, with little hope to ſee it revived, unleſs we ſhould live to behold the renewal of times equally calamitous with thoſe which firſt called us forth from our private ſtations; that there is yet, and for ſome weeks will be ſufficient time to move the County, ſo as to anſwer the great end of obtaining effectual ſupport to Mr. Pitt's motion; that in that caſe Mr. Pitt may probably ſupport the queſtion in a firmer tone, and by more deciſive meaſures than can be expected from him if the People continue in their preſent ſtate of languor; that, in fact, this is the criſis of the whole buſineſs, and a timely effort now probably may decide the ſtruggle. It may, perhaps, be an unneceſſary obſervation; but in matter of ſuch importance and delicacy, I would rather chooſe to err on the ſafe ſide, than the reverſe. I therefore beg to appriſe you, that what I have here ſaid of Mr. Pitt's probable conduct, in certain ſuppoſed emergencies, is *wholly conjectural ſpeculation*. On his character, and the conduct he was likely to hold in ſome ſuppoſable caſes, I have thought much, and perhaps ſuch conjectures may appear not wholly without uſe, and unfit to be attended to. Until I hear again

from you, and your Friends, I ſhall chiefly apply myſelf, as you deſire, to communicate Mr. Pitt's reſolution to other Reforming Bodies. I have done it here, and with great effect.

I am, Dear Sir,
Cordially your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper VII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. JAMES WILKINSON.

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST. JAMES'S,
December 21, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I Am not ſo anxious as I was for *an early Meeting* in Yorkſhire. I thought there was a greater degree of vigour in that County than in any other; and for that reaſon, and alſo becauſe I had the moſt connection with it, and the moſt extenſive correſpondence in it, I thought it right to begin there, and my liſt of Letters written into that County is by no means an inconſiderable one. But as I find the great ſubject is likely to be taken up in other Counties with all that zeal and ardour which I hoped to have found in Yorkſhire, *an early* Meeting at York, *as an incentive to the reſt of England*, is not abſolutely neceſſary as I had

had thought it to be. I am heartily glad to find I am miſtaken.

In this Metropolis, the intelligence conveyed to you in my laſt Letter has been gradually let out, in order that time to communicate it generally in Yorkſhire might be gained, which I thought to be my duty, and *for the intereſt of the Cauſe*. It is now ſpreading faſt in Town, and in many parts of England, and I am happy to aſſure you that Mr. Pitt's declaration of his intention reſpecting a Reform in the Repreſentation in the next Seſſion, is thought to be *an honeſt*, *a bold*, and *a very important* declaration. Dr. Jebb has juſt informed me that, in Suffolk, Mr. Grigby, the Aſſociation Member for that County, has lately been taking ſome very deciſive ſteps for a County Meeting there. This was before Mr. Pitt's declaration *was known*. That it will add to the zeal there, is not to be doubted. The Doctor alſo informs me that Mr. Bolt, a Gentleman of weight in Hants, ſet out for that County with an intention to put forward a General Meeting, as ſoon as he heard of Mr. Pitt's declaration. Courage, my good Friend. All will go on well. *

I am ever your's,

C. WYVILL.

* In private life, frank, benevolent, and beloved by numerous friends: in his public character, honoured as an exemplary Clergyman, a reſpectable Magiſtrate, a virtuous Patriot, equally friendly to a temperate Reformation in the State and in the Church: ſuch is the Man to whom this Letter was addreſſed. And yet ſome years after the date of it, theſe great virtues could not ſhield him from

Paper VIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Dec.* 24, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE juſt ſeen Mr. Pitt again, and I repeat what I ſaid before, *this is the criſis of the Cauſe, and the fate of the whole depends on vigour now.*

I have written many Letters into different parts of England, to ſome of which it has not hitherto been poſſible I could receive anſwers. What I have received, are encouraging. But here, the declaration made by Mr. Pitt has had a very ſenſible effect indeed. All our Friends are eager to encourage the People. I have heard good reports from Suffolk and Hants. But all I vouch for at preſent is, that the utmoſt efforts will be made in the Metropolis. I dined yeſterday at a private houſe, where many zealous Friends were invited to meet. Co-operation was agreed on. All was harmony and mu-

from the rage of popular tumult. At Sheffield, ſurrounded as he was by thoſe who revered him, he was attacked by a miſguided Rabble, his houſe was fired, his perſon endangered, and his life only preſerved by a ſudden flight. Since his eſcape from thoſe outrageous Rioters, if Mr. Wilkinſon has been leſs active than he was before in appealing to great Aſſemblies of the People againſt Miniſterial corruption, if he has been more inclined to acquieſce under invaſions of Popular Right which he never could approve, his apology may here be found: and no man will haſtily reject it, who conſiders what his own conduct might have been, had he been thus beſet, and thus had eſcaped from ſimilar danger.

tual

tual good underſtanding. In conſequence I ſuppoſe there will be a large Conſtitutional Meeting to-night, and a Reſolution to call the Quintuple Meeting in a ſhort time.*

You will have much ſtrength in Yorkſhire, I believe, from unexpected quarters.

I am leſs anxious for the movement of Yorkſhire than I was: as an incentive to the reſt of England, I ceaſe to think it ſo very material, though I ſtill wiſh it for the good of the Cauſe, and the honour of Individuals and the County at large.

Ever moſt cordially,
though in extreme haſte,
Your's,
C. WYVILL.

* By the great majority of the Counties theſe hopes were totally diſappointed; and even in the Metropolis it was found impoſſible to excite any great or general intereſt. A Common Hall aſſembled in the City of London, was attended by about three hundred Perſons, forming leſs than a twentieth part of the whole Livery of London.

Paper IX.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Earl FAUCONBERG.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Jan.* 18, 1785.

My Lord,

I TAKE the earlieſt opportunity to communicate to your Lordſhip intelligence which I have juſt received from Yorkſhire, and of which it is important, in every view, without delay to appriſe a Nobleman whoſe property and connections in that County are ſo extenſive, and who is ſo decided a Friend to the preſent Government, and alſo to that Reformation of Abuſes in our Parliamentary Repreſentation which the Miniſter has declared to be one principal object of his Adminiſtration.

I find a Requiſition to the Sheriff to call a County Meeting at York in the courſe of this month, has appeared to ſeveral reſpectable Gentlemen to be a proper meaſure. A paper for that purpoſe has been ſigned in the neighbourhood of Leeds, Wakefield, Rotherham, and Sheffield; and I apprehend it is either already tranſmitted to Mr. Danby, or will be ſent to him in a few days. It is the intention of the Gentlemen by whom the Requiſition has been promoted to propoſe to the County a Petition to Parliament for the Improvement of our Repreſentation; which, conſidering the part taken by the County for ſeveral years

years in ſupport of that meaſure, they truſt will be generally deemed a proper and a well-timed propoſal, ſince a more favourable opportunity can hardly preſent itſelf to recommend, with effect, that neceſſary Reform, than when it is profeſſedly taken up by a Miniſter who is an undoubted Friend to the Conſtitution *in all its branches.*

I own my private opinion goes with the Promoters of a County Meeting, which ſtrikes me as a neceſſary meaſure, if we wiſh to preſerve conſiſtency of character to promote a Reformation which would produce the moſt eſſential benefit to the Country, or to ſupport an Adminiſtration by whoſe aſſiſtance the Rights of both *the Crown* and *the People* have been protected againſt the attempted uſurpation of an ambitious Ariſtocracy. But I am aware that an Aſſembly of the County of York may afford an opportunity to thoſe who prefer the intereſt of a Party to the general welfare of the Public, to declaim againſt various meaſures of Government, which however unavoidable from the immenſe expences of the late unfortunate war, cannot be palatable to the People at large. Hence a neceſſity appears to ariſe that every poſſible exertion ſhould be made to obtain a numerous and reſpectable attendance of the real Friends to the propoſed Reformation of Parliament, not only to ſecure that moſt eſſential point, which after the repeated declaration of the ſentiments of the County of York might ſeem hardly to admit a doubt, but to guard againſt

any

any inſidious motion which the Adherents of the Ariſtocratical Combination may endeavour to connect with the intended Petition.

It would be to the Friends of this meaſure matter of great ſatisfaction and encouragement, if your Lordſhip ſees it in the ſame point of view; and I ſhould be happy, my Lord, to wait upon you at any time for a more particular explanation of my ſentiments, or any farther communication which it may be in my power to make.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your moſt obedient

humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper X.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* WILLIAM DANBY, Eſq; Sheriff *of the* County *of* York.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Jan.* 1*ſt*, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I AM happy to have received from the Weſt-Riding, information of our Friends there having reſolved to ſend you a Requiſition to call the County together; and not leſs ſo, to be aſſured of your unchangeable zeal for the Conſtitution, and your intention to comply with ſuch Requiſition, as abſolutely neceſſary,

neceſſary, in the preſent ſituation of affairs, to give efficacy to the virtuous attempt of the Miniſter *to reſtore it, in its genuine ſpirit.*

I find the Weſt-Riding Gentlemen are diſpoſed to mention to you the 21ſt inſtant as a proper day for the Meeting. I have repreſented to them the various reaſons of policy which occur to me as pointing to a later day, but I fear they may not appear ſufficiently convincing. I therefore beg leave to aſſure you, that I am induced to wiſh for the appointment of the 31ſt inſtant, or the 1ſt of February, (if certainly within the period of your Shrievalty) not only on account of the inferior conſiderations of convenience reſpecting the County Meeting itſelf, and the better probability of our ſucceſs at it, but alſo on account of reaſons of vaſtly greater magnitude, which, from late converſation, and the beſt intelligence I am able to obtain, I am ſatisfied do ſtrongly recommend the lateſt day in your power to name. As it would be improper to enter into an explanation of theſe reaſons, or the authority on which I hold them, I can only ſay, if ever you and the other diſintereſted Friends of the Public placed any degree of confidence in my integrity and judgment, I beg you to be aſſured it is not on ſlight grounds I moſt earneſtly entreat that the lateſt day, clearly and indiſputably within your Shrievalty may be the day fixed. I do not exaggerate in ſaying, that perhaps the fate of the Great Queſtion, and of thoſe who ſo nobly ſupport it,

it, may be involved in the decision of this difficulty.

When I have the pleasure to see you, I will explain myself clearly and fully, and have not a doubt you will approve my earnestness on this occasion. I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Most truly your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL TOOKER, Esq.

NEROT's HOTEL, *Jan.* 1, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I FIND it is of the greatest importance to the effect we wish produced on Parliament, that the Meeting should be not only after the 25th of January, but even as late as the term of the present Shrievalty will admit. You will easily conceive this cannot with propriety be more fully explained. But if ever my integrity had any weight with you and our other excellent Friends, it is on this occasion I wish you to trust me when I assure you, upon far better authority than my own, and a much superior judgment, that it is essential to obviate the greatest difficulties attending the question, to let Parliament meet before us

as long as the date of Mr. Danby's Shrievalty will allow; that Yorkſhire ſhould not meet till the 31ſt inſt. or the 1ſt of February. God grant you ſucceſs, my firm and generous Friend *, and believe me

Ever your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

NEROT's HOTEL, *Jan.* 1, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I RECEIVED your's and Mr. Tooker's Letter laſt night, but being engaged with a Merchant of the City in contriving means to get that Body to aſſiſt, I had not time to anſwer either of you; neither have I now an opportunity to ſay much more than that I am heartily glad the bold meaſure of a Meeting is determined on. I ſhould rejoice infinitely

* Such upon all occaſions the Editor had found him; and ſuch *perſonally*, he truſts, he now ſhould find him, notwithſtanding the variation of their political ſentiments, and their conſequent difference of conduct, during the laſt ten years. The Editor ſtill reflects with ſatisfaction on their long co-operation, in a juſt and neceſſary purſuit, in the courſe of which he received from Mr. Tooker many teſtimonies of his eſteem and confidence; and he ſtill feels a pleaſure in acknowledging how much the Cauſe of virtuous Reform was indebted to his firm and prudent ſupport.

more,

more, if you and Mr. Duncombe, and ſome other Friends, were nearer my opinion. I am far from ſaying or thinking there are not many difficulties and ſome riſque attending this meaſure. But I think I perceive hazards on every ſide; and when that is the caſe, I am for taking the hardy part to face danger, and be fairly overcome, if that muſt be our fate, rather than periſh by the mere effect of inactivity, and increaſing diſcouragement, its certain conſequence in all popular buſineſs. But, in truth, I do hope in Yorkſhire we ſhall ſucceed; in many other Counties we ſhall be well ſupported.

I ſaw Mr. Pitt to-day, to whom the intelligence * I communicated laſt night had given pleaſure. I have truly ſtated objections, difficulties, hazards; but he is undiſmayed, and reſolved to meet them all; and though it muſt undoubtedly be a ſevere conflict, I do hope he will ſuſtain every poſſible attack, and, by the People's aſſiſtance, beat down Oppoſition, *from whatever quarter it may come.*

Ever your's moſt cordially,

C. WYVILL.

* This intelligence was, that a Requiſition had been reſolved on by the Friends of Parliamentary Reform in Yorkſhire, requeſting the Sheriff to ſummon the Freeholders to a General Meeting at York. Mr. Pitt was anxious to obtain their ſupport of his intended meaſure, and at laſt it was deciſively given by a very reſpectable Aſſembly.

Paper XIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

ASTON, *Jan.* 5*th*, 1785.

Dear Mr. Wyvill,

I INCLOSE you a Letter of Mr. Tooker's, which he deſired to forward after I had read it, and alſo a Letter of Mr. Withers's to him, for your peruſal. I beg you to believe, that, as this buſineſs is now ſo far advanced, that it would be improper, as well as impracticable, to retreat, I ſhall forward it as much as I am able; and as it is the only ſtep during the courſe of our acting together in which I have not followed you with my abſolute approbation, you will think that I ſhall ſtill proceed with the warmth I did before, as depending on your better judgment. I cannot, however, help thinking that I know as much of mankind as you do, and therefore let me warn you againſt putting any confidence in a certain Noble Lord, who was either educated at St. Omer's, or is as great a Jeſuit as if he had been educated there. I had a Letter from my friend Bourne, from Hull, expreſſing the doubts they had of the propriety of a Meeting, which I anſwered by this poſt, deſiring my relation, Mr. Pool, to give his attendance, and to do all in his power to make the Meeting numerous. It would be well for you to write to Mr Pool,

expreſſing, as far as you can, the approbation of the Miniſter to the meaſure. I will give you my reaſons for this when we meet at York. On the whole, I depend greatly on the political folly of our opponents; they have it in their power greatly to obſtruct Adminiſtration; but I think they will either not uſe it, or uſe it ſillily, on the preſent opportunity. Your argument I ſhould have held a good one (in your Letter before this of to-day, which I am anſwering) viz. that the idea of the late taxes would be loſt in the popularity the Miniſter would gain by his ſupport of this queſtion, could I be perſuaded that the withdrawing a ſingle tax is not held of greater conſequence with the majority of the Freeholders than the annihilation of ten Burgeſs tenures. But this is mere talk at preſent. I will not detain you from more important buſineſs, and will conclude with repeating my aſſurances that I will do all in my power to forwad the meaſure; therefore you will not have occaſion to write again to me on the ſubject, except you wiſh me to do any thing in particular toward forwarding it, which you will find me always ſedulous to effect, being

Moſt cordially your's,

W. MASON.*

* Except this Letter of Mr. Maſon's, not one of the replies to the preceding Letters has been preſerved; but the loſs is of no material conſequence. This ſingle Letter ſufficiently authenticates the repreſentation given by the Editor of the diſpirited ſtate of Yorkſhire, and the reluctance of ſome of the moſt zealous Friends of Reform to hazard a County Meeting at York, to ſupport Mr. Pitt's intended motion.

NUMBER XXXVIII.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Biſhop *of* LANDAFF.

NEROT's HOTEL, *Dec.* 20*th*. 1784.

My Lord,

THOUGH I have not the honour to be perſonally known to your Lordſhip, I take the liberty to communicate the following intelligence, becauſe, unleſs I have been greatly miſinformed as to your ſentiments on the ſubject of Political Reformation, and your honourable and unreſerved conduct in ſupport of thoſe ſentiments, the intelligence will give you pleaſure; and alſo, becauſe an early communication to the Biſhop of Landaff of Mr. Pitt's manly and unequivocal avowal of his intention reſpecting that ſubject, may be of the greateſt conſequence to the ſucceſs of his intended meaſure, if your Lordſhip ſhould deem this an occaſion on which your influence and authority at Cambridge, and in the neighbouring County, may be properly exerted in

favour of the General Queſtion of Parliamentary Reformation. In a late interview with Mr. Pitt, I have been authoriſed by him to declare, that he means to bring that ſubject before the Houſe of Commons as early as poſſible in the enſuing Seſſion; that he will ſupport the intended propoſitions to the utmoſt of his ſtrength, and exert his whole power and credit, *as a Man* and *as a Miniſter*, *honeſtly* and *boldly*, to carry ſuch a meliorated ſyſtem of Repreſentation as may place the Conſtitution on a footing of permanent ſecurity.—I am happy to add, that the Duke of Richmond perfectly agrees with Mr. Pitt as to the moſt adviſable means of effecting a Reformation of Parliament.

I have the honour to be,

With high reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Biſhop *of* LANDAFF *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

CAMBRIDGE, *Dec.* 22, 1784.

Sir,

I THINK myſelf much indebted to you for the honour of your Letter of yeſterday, and take the earlieſt opportunity of expreſſing to you, without reſerve, my ſentiments on the ſubject of it.

Mr. Pitt's agreeing to ſupport the meaſure of a Parliamentary Reform *as a Man*, pleaſes me very well, and I believe him to be honourable and ſincere in the declaration which he has made; but I am not pleaſed with the deſign of ſupporting it *as a Miniſter*; for I am ſo great an enemy to influence over Parliament, that I deteſt its exertion even in a cauſe which I approve; and in a cauſe of this conſequence, if its ſucceſs be not derived from the full conviction of thoſe who are to decide on its merits, I think it ought not to be carried at all.

The General Queſtion of a Parliamentary Reformation has my warmeſt wiſhes for a favourable iſſue to its diſcuſſion, but I am not ſanguine in my hopes of ſeeing much good reſulting to the Conſtitution from any mode of Reformation which I have yet heard of, nor am I able (though I have often ſpeculated upon the ſubject) to deviſe any plan which I

myſelf durſt venture to propoſe as likely to anſwer the end in view. Nothing is wanted but a Parliament in which every Individual would decide in the Houſe of Commons, on the concerns of the Nation, with as much impartiality as a Juror decides in a Court of Juſtice on the concerns of his Fellow-Citizens; but this impartiality can never be expected to take place, whilſt there are ſuch powerful weights as Avarice and Ambition to incline men's judgments to one ſide. The mode of Corruption may be changed, but Corruption itſelf will remain as long as there is ſo much public wealth to be diſtributed, and ſo many public honours to be diſpoſed of amongſt the Members of the Houſe of Commons, and their Connections.

The manner of electing the Members of the Houſe of Commons, and the time for which they are to be elected, are ſubjects on which men's minds are much divided. I conſider them as matters of importance only ſo far as they contribute to the introducing of honeſt and independent Members into the Houſe, and to the keeping them ſo whilſt they ſit there. And hence I am not one of thoſe who would ſtickle for the abſtract right of every Individual having a vote in the election, nor for the ancient practice of having a new Parliament every year, provided the integrity of Parliament could be obtained by any other means. I freely own to you, that I fear this end will never be obtained to any ſalutary extent, by any means whatever: other means,

means, however, of doing all that is poſſible, may perhaps be thought of leſs obnoxious to cavil and miſconſtruction than either the extenſion of the right of voting to every Individual, or the reſtriction of the duration of Parliament to a ſingle year.

With reſpect to any influence which I may be ſuppoſed to have either in the Univerſity or in the County, it is too ſmall to be mentioned, even if my ſituation would allow me, with decency, to exert it in the manner I did on a former occaſion, when the calamity of the American War gave it an energy which it could not have now: I ſhall not, however, be backward in embracing any opportunity of ſignifying my intention to concur with thoſe who, in a legal and peaceable way, ſhall on this, or on any future occaſion, attempt to procure a Reformation of Parliament.

I have the honour to be,
With great eſteem,
Sir,
Your obliged ſervant,
R. LANDAFF.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Biſhop *of* LANDAFF.

BURTON-HALL, *near* BEDALE,
March 24th, 1802.

My Lord,

I INCLOSE for your inſpection a Copy of a Letter, dated December 22d, 1784, which I had the honour to receive from your Lordſhip, in anſwer to a Letter of mine, communicating the declaration which Mr. Pitt had authoriſed me to make, of his intention, in the courſe of that Seſſion, to move Parliament to reform the Repreſentation of the People. I think your Lordſhip's anſwer contains ſentiments which every man of integrity muſt approve, and ſuggeſts the conſideration of difficulties attending the purſuit of Political Reformation, which, without damping the zeal of Reformers, may powerfully incline them to moderation in their plans. Your Letter, therefore, appears to me to be written exactly with that temper and judgment which fit it to do good in the preſent ſtrange, unſettled times, when the Public feels the enormous increaſe of the Influence of the Crown, without daring to complain of it, and when nearly all men ſee that there is a neceſſity for Political Reformation, and yet almoſt no man dares to recommend it. The appearance of that Letter, even without the weighty ſignature of your

your Lordſhip, in the Volume of Papers wich I am preparing to publiſh, might probably have a beneficial effect. I may venture to add, that it would alſo ſtand in its proper place among Papers written with a ſimilar view, which I received, in the courſe of my correſpondence, from other diſtinguiſhed Friends of Conſtitutional Liberty. But ſtill I hope your Lordſhip, on peruſing it, will ſee no objection to permit the publication of your Letter in my intended Volume, *with your ſignature annexed*, whence ſentiments ſo much to be approved will undoubtedly derive additional weight.

But there are other reaſons for making this requeſt, which muſt not be concealed from your Lordſhip. In my Letters communicating Mr. Pitt's intention to Gentlemen in many parts of the Kingdom, the expreſſion uſed, or intended to be uſed, was, that he would ſupport the Cauſe of Reformation "*honeſtly as a Miniſter.*" On inſpecting the Copy of my Letter to your Lordſhip, I have found the word "*honeſtly*" is there. The expreſſion was mine, not Mr. Pitt's; and it was deſigned to convey that idea which converſation with him had recently impreſſed upon my mind, viz. that whatever weight or influence his official ſtation gave him, that weight and influence he was determined to employ in a manner *conſiſtent with integrity, and not otherwiſe*, to promote the Cauſe of Reformation. I therefore requeſt your Lordſhip's permiſſion to publiſh your Letter, authenticated

thenticated with your name, in order that a ſhort explanatory Note to this effect may be ſubjoined to it. By thus putting the rectitude of his conduct on this occaſion paſt all doubt, I wiſh to do juſtice to Mr. Pitt, and your permiſſion will furniſh for it the moſt convenient opportunity.

I alſo wiſh to have the ſame convenient opportunity to do juſtice to myſelf; for this miſconception muſt neceſſarily implicate my character with Mr. Pitt's. If he could be juſtly cenſured, as having intended to employ corrupt means to carry a favourite meaſure, I ſhould be liable to a ſimilar condemnation for having expreſſed or implied my approbation of that intention. I aſſure your Lordſhip, that a declaration of ſuch intention, from any man whatever, would have met, not my approbation, but my direct and unqualified cenſure. To prevent or rectify any miſtake injurious to my character in this reſpect, the printing of your Lordſhip's Letter in the manner deſired, with the ſeries of Letters relating to Mr. Pitt's declaration, will afford the fitteſt occaſion. It is your wiſh, no doubt, that the character of Mr. Pitt may, where it can, be cleared. I am alſo fully ſatisfied that you are equally diſpoſed to lend your aſſiſtance, that juſtice may be done, whether it concerns the reputation of a great Stateſman, or that of the humbleſt Individual. But when the ſame courteſy will furniſh the beſt means of juſtification to both, I flatter myſelf your Lordſhip will feel an increaſed diſpoſition to conſent.

Your

Your doing ſo will be very gratefully acknowledged as a kindneſs and an obligation conferred upon,

My Lord,

Your moſt faithful and
obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL. *

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Biſhop *of* ST. ASAPH.

NIBOT's HOTEL, *Dec.* 24, 1784.

My Lord,

I AM authoriſed by Mr. Pitt to declare that he will bring the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation before the Houſe of Commons as early as poſſible in the next Seſſion; that he will ſupport his intended Propoſitions to the utmoſt of his ſtrength; and that he will exert his whole power and credit, *as a Man*, and *as a Miniſter*, *honeſtly* and *boldly*, to carry ſuch a meliorated ſyſtem of Repreſentation as may place the Conſtitution on a footing of permanent ſecurity.

I am happy, my Lord, to communicate this intelligence, becauſe I am confident it will

* The Biſhop's reply to this Letter gratified the Editor with his conſent, yielded in the moſt obliging manner. He feels himſelf much indebted for the proper firſt opportunity to juſtify Mr. Pitt and himſelf, thus kindly afforded him, and requeſts his Lordſhip to accept his ſincere acknowledgments.

give

give pleaſure to your Lordſhip, and to every other firm and unqueſtionable Friend to the Conſtitution, in its genuine ſpirit; for the recovery of which nothing ſeems now to be wanted but a timely, regular, and vigorous exertion of the People at large. Not knowing the Dean of St. Aſaph's Addreſs in Hampſhire, I take the liberty to trouble your Lordſhip with the incloſed Letter for him; and at the ſame time I congratulate you, with the moſt ſincere cordiality, on his defeat of the late groundleſs and malicious proſecution.

I have the honour to be,
With high reſpect,
My Lord,
Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Biſhop *of* ST. ASAPH *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Rev. Sir,

I FEEL myſelf much obliged for the intelligence you gave me of Mr. Pitt's moſt ſerious intentions to move for a Reform in the Repreſentation of the People, that valuable part of the Conſtitution which gives us the rank of Freemen. Such intentions are very

very rare and very honourable in a firſt Miniſter, and I heartily wiſh him ſucceſs; but I muſt own, that upon this occaſion my wiſhes are much ſtronger than my hopes. I own I fear that the power of ſerving his Country, which Mr. Pitt poſſeſſed laſt Seſſion, is now very much diminiſhed, if not entirely loſt. His principal Friends in the Cabinet will give aſſiſtance with a better will to increaſe the Power of the Crown, than to reſtore the Rights of the People.

For my part, I ſhall always give my feeble ſupport to motions that tend ſo clearly to the Public Good, from whatever quarter they come. I intend to vote, if I have opportunity, for Mr. Pitt's Bill of Reform, and Mr. Fox's Bill to reſtore the Rights of Jurymen; and I ſhall think more highly of thoſe Gentlemen, if, upon this occaſion, each of them ſhould ſupport the other's meaſure.

Give me leave to aſſure you, that I feel a particular ſatisfaction in addreſſing myſelf to one public character, whoſe integrity was never yet called in queſtion, and that I am, with the reſpect that is due to ſo meritorious a conduct *, Rev. Sir,

Your moſt obedient
and moſt humble ſervant,
J. ST. ASAPH.

P. S. I thank you for your juſt congratulations on our releaſe from the very groundleſs

* It is with peculiar ſatisfaction that the Editor commits to the preſs the Letter of this truly virtuous and amiable Prelate. It is a valuable teſtimony of his ſentiments on the queſtion of Conſtitutional

leſs and very malicious proſecution of my Son, who, in my poor opinion, has deſerved well of his Country. † It may ſoon appear that Sir Lloyd Kenyan, who thinks himſelf unobſerved, is intitled to the moſt virulent and the moſt indecent ſhare of that malice, and he does no honour to Mr. Pitt by publicly affecting to be ſo very deep in his confidence.

tional Reform, and it properly accompanies the preceding Letter by another diſtinguiſhed Advocate of Civil and Religious Liberty of the ſame claſs, which ſeldom is found to produce two ſuch Co-temporaries.

Biſhop Shipley was an elegant Scholar, an admired Preacher of Religion, and a truly benevolent Patriot. During the American War, his Diſcourſes were applauded not alone for their uncommon elegance of ſtile, but for the juſtneſs alſo, and liberality of their views, and the force with which they impreſſed on the Public mind the equitable principles of Chriſtianity, by which Chriſtian Communities and Individuals are equally bound to regulate their conduct.

The advantage of taxing the American Colonies, without their conſent, by the Parliament of Britain, was the mean temptation by which the Miniſter of that day ſeduced the major part of this Nation to approve his meaſure. By the perſuaſive eloquence of Biſhop Shipley, and the nervous reaſoning of Biſhop Watſon and Mr. Newtonde Cappe, the perverted ſentiments of the Public were gradually corrected; and influenced by the authority of the Public, Parliament (renouncing the groſs immorality inculcated by the Miniſter of Corruption) reverted to the golden rule of our Religion, "That we ought to do as we would be done unto."

But how liable to change is the morality of Nations and their Governors! How inconſiſtent with this rule has been the conduct of Britain during the laſt ten years! How has ſhe ſuffered from the Ex-Miniſter that worſt humiliation, the degradation of her moral character, allowing him to raiſe all the vile paſſions of human nature, in aid of his attempt to compel a powerful, independent Nation, to renounce the Government of its choice!

† The Dean of St. Aſaph, the Biſhop's patriotic Son, had been proſecuted for a Libel, and the proſecution had been grounded on the ſhare he had taken in publiſhing or diſtributing a Dialogue on the arduous queſtion of Reſiſtance, written with great freedom and ability by the late eminent Sir William Jones. The defence of the

the Dean was undertaken by a few public-spirited Individuals, who defrayed his law expences by a subscription collected by the Treasurer of the Constitutional Society. The Tract in question had been first published by that Society, of which Sir William Jones was then a Member.

In the course of the prosecution much virulence had been displayed by the Dean's Accusers, who yet were unable to extort from the Jury by whom he was tried a verdict of his guilt. They were satisfied that he had distributed the Dialogue with a *good intention*, and therefore they could not conscientiously find him guilty of having *maliciously* published it. Their verdict, in the language of Lawyers, was *special*; that is, they found the Dean guilty of *publishing only*. The matter ended on a motion in arrest of judgment, or for a new trial.

The conduct of the Flintshire Jury, on this occasion, was irresolute, and their verdict, in the judgment of common sense, was absurd. Yet their irresolution and absurdity probably led the way to that restoration of the Rights of Juries which was soon after obtained from Parliament, by the joint efforts of Mr. Fox and Mr. Erskine, assisted by the venerable Earl Camden, the Minister himself laudably consenting to the measure.

Yet after the Right to judge of the Law as well as the Fact, in matters of Libel, as in other criminal cases, had been restored to Juries, they have been induced, in these later and worse times, to convict accused Persons against the express provisions of the Law, in cases in which a guilty intention, essential to constitute criminality, neither was proved, nor could possibly exist †. When Jurors thus timorously or corruptly betray the Rights of the Public, it may be allowable to ask,

"Quid Leges, sine moribus vanæ
Proficiunt."

The Editor cannot close this Note respecting the prosecution of the Dean of St. Asaph, without adverting to the satisfaction which the good Bishop enjoyed in the patriotism and the deliverance of his Son, and the rising reputation of his accomplished Son-in-Law. In the Dean, he lived to see with happiness a Son throughly imbued with his own generous sentiments, sharing his anxiety to close the Civil War, and feeling his zeal to support Constitutional Liberty, even then endangered by the growing corruption of the Times; and when singled out for prosecution, sustaining the attack of Power with becoming fortitude, and in effect acquitted by his Country.—In Sir William Jones he had the higher felicity to behold a Son-in-Law possessing similar sentiments, endowed with a rare assemblage of great virtues and great talents, and fast advancing to the foremost ranks of fame. He was indeed a Man formed

† The Juries who in 1795 acquitted Mr. Horne Tooke and his Associates of the charge of High Treason, must be excepted from this censure. In fact, they deserve high commendation.

to

to improve and dignify Human Society, and his merits are far above the feeble and imperfect praiſe which the Editor is able to beſtow. But when ſome Writer, duly qualified for the talk, ſhall undertake to deſcribe his character, let it not be forgotten that Sir William Jones was an Enemy to the injuſtice which produced the reſiſtance of America, a Friend to the Rights of the Britiſh People, and in the great Aſſemblies held in the Metropolis, near the end of the Civil War, a zealous and eloquent Advocate for the Reformation of Parliament.

NUMBER

NUMBER XXXIX.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* William Vaughan, Esq.

Sir,

I AM authoriſed by Mr. Pitt to aſſert, that he will bring the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation before the Houſe of Commons as early as poſſible in the approaching Seſſion; that he will ſupport his intended propoſitions to the utmoſt of his power and credit, *as a Man* and *as a Miniſter*, *honeſtly and boldly*, to carry ſuch a meliorated ſyſtem of Repreſentation as may place the Conſtitution on a footing of permanent ſecurity.

I am happy, Sir, to communicate intelligence which I truſt will be ſatisfactory to you, and to every other firm and unqueſtionable Friend to the Liberty of the People; and I can venture to aſſure you, from recent communication with many reſpectable Gentlemen in Yorkſhire, that it is highly probable, if the Metropolis and the County of Middleſex ſhould be heartily diſpoſed by Petition to Parliament, or in any other proper mode to

teſtify their ſentiments in favour of the *General Queſtion* of *Parliamentary Reformation*, or of Mr. Pitt's *Specific Plan*, when known, a vigorous effort will be made by the County of York, in co-operation with thoſe reſpectable Bodies, to give effectual ſupport to that neceſſary meaſure, the Improvement of our Repreſentation.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your moſt faithful and
obedient humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.*

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* WILLIAM VAUGHAN, Eſq.

NEROT's HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST. JAMES's,
December 25, 1784.

Sir,

IT is the opinion of ſome of our moſt judicious Friends, whom I have had an opportunity to conſult ſince I wrote to you, that the publication of Mr. Pitt's intention, reſpecting the Reformation of Parliament, would be, for ſome time, an extreme diſadvantage to the Cauſe. Therefore, though I think that the intelligence

* A duplicate of this Letter was ſent to the Aldermen Wilkes, Sawbridge, and Townſend; alſo one, nearly ſimilar, to Mr. Granville Sharpe, and other Citizens of London.

intelligence can hardly be too much circulated *in private*, I muſt entreat you to conſider my Letter of yeſterday as not intended for public inſpection. I am,

Sir,

With great reſpect,

Your moſt faithful

obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL. *

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* GRANVILLE SHARPE, Eſq.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Dec.* 27, 1784.

Dear Sir,

AS you ſeemed inclined this morning at my ſuggeſtion to wait upon the Lord Mayor, Mr. B. Watſon, and Mr. Le Meſurier, to communicate Mr. Pitt's late generous declaration on the ſubject of Parliamentary Reform, I think it proper to aſſure you, in writing, that I have no objection to your giving each of thoſe Gentlemen a copy of my Letter to you, containing that declaration.

I alſo think you may with great truth and propriety obſerve to them, that as the buſineſs

* A duplicate of this Letter was ſent to Mr. Granville Sharpe and Mr. M'Grugat. But the ſecret was too widely entruſted to be kept long; indeed it was unneceſſary that it ſhould, and the Editor forbore to enjoin ſecrecy to his other Correſpondents.

of Political Reformation has been taken up by a Miniſter who has ſhewn himſelf a Friend to the Conſtitution *in all its branches*, the apprehenſion of danger from Innovation and a deſire to puſh Reformation too far, which formerly was the principal objection to our propoſal, ſeems now to be done away.

Beyond this general obſervation, I own I ſee nothing which can be urged with propriety to reinforce Mr. Pitt's declaration, and induce thoſe Gentlemen to take an active part in favour of Parliamentary Reformation in the City of London. On ſuch an occaſion, arguments merely of a conjectural nature would be thought, and perhaps juſtly, to deſerve but little attention. I am,

Dear Sir,
With great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL. *

* Mr. Granville Sharpe is a worthy deſcendant of Archbiſhop Sharpe, from whom he ſeems to have inherited, with all his piety and zeal for Engliſh Proteſtantiſm, a double portion of intrepidity and zeal in the Cauſe of Civil Liberty. Mr. G. Sharpe was, and ſtill is, no doubt, an ardent Advocate for a more extended plan of Reformation than that propoſed by Mr. Pitt. He ſtrenuouſly contended for Annual Parliaments, and the repeal of the diſfranchiſing Statutes of Henry the VIth. Yet he prudently ſupported the leſs-extended plan, convinced, perhaps, that more was not then attainable by any regular and peaceful efforts; and ſuch alone were the means he ever would employ, the only means which would have ſuited the mildneſs and benignity of his character.

The exertions of Mr. G. Sharpe in favour of the oppreſſed Africans entitle him to the higheſt praiſe: he deſerves to be eſteemed one of the moſt humane and benevolent of mankind.

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* WILLIAM MIDDLETON, Esq.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Dec.* 31, 1784.

Sir,

AS you have had the goodneſs to open your ſentiments to me on the ſubject of Popular Meetings, eſpecially in the County of Suffolk, on the preſent occaſion I have no heſitation to declare my own with equal frankneſs, convinced the Cauſe of the People can only be promoted by a general and unreſerved communication between the Friends of that Cauſe in the various parts of the Kingdom.

I am free to own my opinion is, that Mr. Pitt's late ſpirited declaration forms the very criſis of the Cauſe, and that every poſſible effort ought now to be made to obtain a timely and vigorous ſupport, at County Meetings, to the *General Queſtion* of Parliamentary Reformation.

If the Miniſter had not made the declaration I have had the honour to communicate, the ſilence of the People might have been leſs diſadvantageous. It might have born the conſtruction which you and other Gentlemen ſuppoſe, as if they truſted the declarations of their ſenſe upon the ſubject to a former Houſe of Parliament, would be conſidered *by this*. But the avowal of Mr. Pitt's purpoſe will be

underſtood by both the Friends and the Enemies of Political Reformation as a very diſtinct and a very reſolute Call upon the People to aſſemble, and to expreſs their ſenſe upon the ſubject. And if no ſuch Popular Aſſemblies ſhould be held, or a few Counties only ſhould meet, and in a feeble voice expreſs their wiſh for Reformation, the argument formerly uſed would be repeated with tenfold force, Why ſhould Parliament obtrude upon the Public an innovation not at all deſired by the Public, or deſired by a very inconſiderable part of it? A ſubſtantial change in the Legiſlature of our Country, however neceſſary it may be, cannot be carried by languid and intermitted exertions; it is a hardy propoſal that can only ſucceed by the firm and unwearied perſeverance of the People, aided by the powers of Government itſelf. Nothing ſhort of their united ſtrength ſeems equal to the taſk of overpowering that reſiſtance which *prejudiced*, *factious*, and *corrupt* Men will oppoſe to every Propoſition of Reform which can be ſuggeſted.

Such is the opinion I have formed of the expediency, and even abſolute neceſſity, at this critical juncture, to animate the People by the moſt vigorous exertions, in every part of the Kingdom, and to engage their aſſiſtance, *not to the Miniſter*, but *to their own Cauſe*, which the Miniſter has eſpouſed. To correct abuſes in the Repreſentation of the People, is profeſſedly *one* principal object of his Adminiſtration. It is an object of the greateſt magnitude

nitude which any Miniſter can propoſe, and of the moſt extenſive utility which the Public can ſupport; ſince it is evident, that unleſs the ſpirit of the Conſtitution can be reſtored by a ſubſtantial improvement in that fundamental article, the Liberty of the Nation is held by a precarious tenure; and all our Rights and Liberties muſt remain in a ſtate of imminent peril, expoſed to deſtruction, as recent experience has taught us, from the formidable power of the Crown on one hand, and of the Ariſtocracy on the other.

That theſe obvious truths may make an impreſſion on the People, that the increaſed probability of ſucceſs may rouſe them from their preſent inſenſibility, and engage them to ſupport the Cauſe of Political Reformation with vigour, in many Counties ſeems hardly to admit a doubt. Already their ſpirit is riſing in this Metropolis, where all the Friends of the Conſtitution, as far as I have been informed, are agreed in the policy of making one great and general effort to ſupport the Improvement of our Repreſentation.

I am happy to add, from recent information from Yorkſhire, that a Requiſition to the Sheriff for that purpoſe is juſt reſolved on there. How far this may be practicable in Suffolk, I do not preſume to judge, much leſs to put any conjecture of mine in competition with your better opinion; I only beg leave to ſuggeſt, that continued inactivity is death to any popular enterpriſe, and bold and

hardy meaſures alone can give us a chance to accompliſh the Reformation of Parliament.

I am, Sir, with great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. Dr. COWPER *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

YARMOUTH, *Dec.* 3, 1785.

Sir,

I ESTEEM myſelf much obliged to you for your communication of Mr. Pitt's intention to bring forward in the next Seſſions ſome propoſitions relative to a Parliamentary Reform. That ſome meaſure is neceſſary to ſecure the attachment of the Repreſentatives to the Repreſented, in oppoſition to the bias they may acquire to a preſent, late, or future Miniſter, I think no cool and impartial obſerver can doubt, who has not forgotten the progreſs of the American War, and recollects the violence of a late party. The attempt is certainly worthy of Mr. Pitt's uncommon abilities, and ſtill more ſingular rectitude of heart. I muſt, however, at the ſame time, ingenuouſly confeſs, that I have ſtrong objections againſt all the plans I have ſeen propoſed for carrying this moſt deſirable purpoſe into

into execution. I was in hopes I ſhould ere now have found time to have put my objections together, and to have tranſmitted them to you, otherwiſe I had not ſo long deferred the acknowledgment of the receipt of your favour. As ſoon as a multiplicity of buſineſs will give me leiſure, I will take the liberty of ſending them to you.

I am, Sir, with much reſpect,

Your moſt obedient

humble ſervant,

S. COWPER. *

* The *ſtrong objections* of Dr. Cowper to every plan of Reform which had been propoſed, were never ſtated to the Editor. It is not for him to determine, therefore, whether he ought to be conſidered as a Friend to Popular Rights, who, from the wiſh more effectually to ſecure Public Liberty, objected to the means, though he approved the end, or as a man who cavilled at every propoſition of the Reformers, becauſe Popular Rights were odious to him, and no objection to Reform appeared to want force. From the hand of the Miniſter, perhaps, he would have endured to receive Reform. The man who admitted that ſome meaſure is neceſſary to ſecure the attachment of the Repreſentative to the Repreſented, ſeems not to have been an Enemy to the Rights of the People. Yet it is hard to conceive, that the man who wrote the book *on the Firſt Principles of Government* was in reality a Friend to Popular Rights, and the Liberty of the Nation.

In the controverſy occaſioned by the Reflections of Burke on the French Revolution, Dr. Cowper engaged with zeal; and in the book alluded to, he ſupported Burke's attack on the Principles and the Defenders of Liberty with equal hoſtility of mind, though with a very different and inferior effect. His book is written in a ſtile harſh and obſcure, and marked with the faults which uſually deform the pages of ordinary Controverſialiſts. In it Dr. Prieſtley is treated with peculiar ſeverity; for Dr. Cowper was a learned, an acute, and a zealous Churchman, long accuſtomed to diſputation, and more eager to confute, than willing to convince his Opponents. It is but juſtice, however, to Dr. Cowper to acknowledge, that there is a paſſage in his book reſpecting the deceaſed Dr. John Jebb, which is written with a friendly warmth of affection which prejudice and the continual oppoſition of their ſentiments had not been able to ſubdue. In doing juſtice to the amiable and reſpectable character of Dr. J. Jebb, he did credit to his own.

Paper VI.

Letter *from* THOMAS DAY, Eſq; *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

ANNINGSLEY, *Jan. 4th*, 1785.

Sir,

I AM very happy at the time I acknowledge the receipt of your obliging Letter to have it in my power to expreſs the perſonal eſteem I feel for a Gentleman who has ſo diſintereſtedly done ſo much for the Public. Were either the general ſpirit of the Counties like that of Yorkſhire, or of the Gentlemen who are the natural Leaders of the Counties like your own, we ſhould be much nearer that moſt deſirable object, a Parliamentary Reform.

Should Mr. Pitt, however, bring it on, and in the manner you deſcribe, whatever may be the ſucceſs of the undertaking, all the honeſt and independent part of the Nation will have the greateſt obligation to him for the attempt; and he will ſet an example and eſtabliſh a character hitherto unknown to Miniſters. In the mean-time, whatever may be the event, it is ſomething to have approached ſo near to a generous and elevated object, and ſomething to have done all that human prudence and exertion could do towards preſerving the Liberties of the Nation.

You will perceive, Sir, by the *ſolemn ſtyle* in which I write, that I have no very ſanguine expectations, even from ſo unexpected an event as a Miniſter intereſting himſelf in reſtoring Liberty to a Nation. To ſpeak my ſentiments,

ſentiments, and to you I would ſpeak nothing elſe, I cannot conceive it poſſible, that Virtue and Liberty ſhould be reſtored to a Nation by the means of a body ſo radically corrupted as an Engliſh Houſe of Commons. Had that body preſerved even as much public virtue as a grain of muſtard ſeed, the affairs of this Nation would not have been reduced ſo low as they are at preſent, and, if the corruption of our Repreſentatives has not ſuffered them to effect the eaſy taſk of only preſerving that portion of National Liberty which was aſſerted for the People at the Revolution, I can ſcarcely conceive they will now have the virtue to undo their own work, and reſtore what they have baſely pilfered.

In writing to you upon this important ſubject, I will take the liberty of mentioning *explicitly*, that though I have always gone with thoſe that aſked the moſt, I have never formed any preciſe idea of what alteration would be beſt. I never conſidered the event as being ſufficiently near to require any great degree of accuracy, and were it poſſible to gain, even the ſmalleſt point, I ſhould think it a matter of ſo much conſequence to the real Friends of their Country, that they would have every reaſon to be contented for the preſent. For I rather conſider Public Liberty as conſiſting in the general ſpirit and exertion of the People, than in any poſitive forms or inſtitutions, which, however excellent in themſelves, can never be kept up a moment without the former.—After all, ſhould nothing elſe be done,

I ſhould

I ſhould think that it would be an alteration of prodigious conſequence could the votes be taken by diſtricts, and given by ballot; and I am very doubtful, (but that idea I ſubmit with the greateſt deference) whether that alteration alone would not do more for the People than all the reſt without them; but this the Country Gentlemen will never conſent to. I am not quite clear, that even the Gentlemen of Yorkſhire will conſent.

Should there be the leaſt motion in any of the neighbouring Counties where I have a right of attending, I will not fail, as I have always done, to expreſs my ſentiments as an humble individual; more, the retired manner in which I live; my great averſion to all Public Dinners, Aſſizes, Elections, Juſtice-Meetings, and every other kind of Meeting by which Country Gentlemen in general eat and drink themſelves into popularity, does not allow me to pretend to; but what I can with great juſtice pretend to, if my paper will permit, is, to be, Sir, an admirer of your character, and

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

THO. DAY. *

Paper VII.

* Rome in her beſt age could not have produced a Citizen more firm, more intrepid, more high-minded than the Author of this Letter. He lived in the Country, in much privacy, but his private life was that of a Sage, temperate, benevolent, and generous. As a public character, he was ardent in ſupport of Liberty, and his energetic eloquence as a Writer and as an Orator, ranked him with the moſt diſtinguiſhed Advocates in that Cauſe. His writings againſt the Civil War with America were much applaud-

ed;

Paper VII.

Letter *from the* Rev. Dr. PRICE *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

NEWINGTON-GREEN, *Jan. 6th*, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE received with particular pleaſure your Letter, and return you my beſt thanks for it. I rejoice to find that Mr. Pitt is ſo much in earneſt about reforming the Repreſentation of the Kingdom. No object ſurely can be more important to a People who wiſh to preſerve Liberty. I had before received this information from a friend of Mr. Pitt's; and, in conſequence of it, had writ to ſome friends in the country, in order to put them upon procuring ſupport for him by Petitions. London and Weſtminſter will, I doubt not,

ed; his inſtructive Hiſtory of Sandford and Merton has been more generally praiſed, and it will tranſmit his name with honour to a diſtant poſterity.

Not long after the date of this Letter, as he was riding an unruly horſe, he was unfortunately thrown and killed. An end to his valuable life was thus put, when the evil times were faſt approaching in which the aid of his powerful abilities was wanted moſt to defend the Rights of the Nation againſt the innovations of an oppreſſive Adminiſtration, and to rouſe the People from that abject proſtration of ſpirit, and that ſordid indifference for Liberty which are unworthy of the Britiſh Character.

It muſt not be omitted, that the plan of Reform propoſed by Mr. Pitt was approved by Mr. Day; and after the rejection of Mr. Pitt's motion in the Houſe of Commons on that ſubject, Mr. Day attended the Meeting at the Thatched Houſe in 1785, and with much force of eloquence ſupported a Reſolution declaring approbation of Mr. Pitt's meaſure, which was moved by the Editor, with a view to unite the Reformers on that ground. The Reſolution, however, was rejected by a conſiderable majority.

be

be ardent in the buſineſs; and I am glad to learn from you, that Yorkſhire is likely to reſume its zeal. This makes me hope ſomething will be done; for I cannot feel any diffidence with reſpect to the ſincerity of Mr. Pitt's zeal in this inſtance, notwithſtanding two objections which I hear often urged againſt him, and which indeed I cannot anſwer; I mean the characters of *ſome* of his aſſociates, who are known to be determined enemies to Reformation, and his not promoting a Reformation in *Ireland*, where the body of the people are more alive, and more unanimous than they are here.

It ſeems to me ſtrange, that no Miniſter has yet taken the path Mr. Pitt ſeems determined to take, from political views only. Certain it is, that the King would be much greater at the head of an independent, honeſt, and real Repreſentation of the Kingdom, than he is at the head of the preſent Mockery of a Repreſentation, which is ſo capable, as he found lately, of being turned againſt him; and a Miniſter who could exert himſelf to the utmoſt in gaining ſuch a Repreſentation for the Kingdom, would be idolized; and, if turned out, would be brought back again, and in time, if it appeared that he perſiſted in his efforts, and maintained his integrity, would become omnipotent, as Mr. Pitt's father once was.

I beg your acceptance of the Pamphlet which will be conveyed to you with this Letter. I have printed but a few copies of it, and they have

have been almoſt all ſent to America. It is the fruit of warm conviction; but I am afraid ſome ſtrong ſentiments in it will need your candour.

Under a ſenſe of your diſtinguiſhed character and merit, and with great reſpect I am,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient
and humble ſervant,
RICH. PRICE.

P. S. I find your Letter has been publiſhed in the papers; but I am entirely ignorant how it got there, for that which I had the pleaſure of receiving has never been out of my own hands, except for about half an hour to be peruſed by one of my neighbours.*

Paper VIII.

* This, and the preceding Letter, by Dr. Price, at page 221, are the only Letters of his which have been preſerved, or, as he believes, were received by the Editor. The candid Reader, who has conſidered them with attention, will probably agree with him in the opinion, that they are written with a ſpirit of moderation and affection for the Conſtitution, on its genuine principles, which is far remote from any reſemblance to the fierce revolutionary ſpirit imputed by Mr. Burke to Dr. Price. If plans of Revolution had been floating in his mind *at this time*, it is highly probable, that ſome mark of diſlike to the Conſtitution, ſome indication of a mind which contemplated more extenſive changes in our form of Government, ſome phraſe expreſſing that atrocity of temper which could encounter, and even promote the convulſions of a Revolution, without fear or ſcruple, would have eſcaped him. This might have been expected, eſpecially in this ſecond Letter, which was written by Dr. Price when his mind muſt have been elevated with hope, from Mr. Pitt's recent declaration of ſupport. But nothing like it is obſervable; and therefore it is reaſonable to conclude, that, at this time, the views of Dr. Price were confined to improve and perpetuate the Conſtitution.—How far Dr. Price may have approved Republican inſtitutions in countries which are in circumſtances more or leſs differnte from thoſe in which Britain is placed, the Editor is unable to determine. He could offer

Paper VIII.

Extract *of a* Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* EBENEZER HOLICE, Esq.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Jan.* 27, 1785.

Sir,

FROM the debates in the House of Commons on Tuesday evening, it is evident, that the proposition intended by Mr. Pitt will receive every proper support that Government

offer nothing but his own conjecture, or what others may have conjectured, perhaps on no better grounds. But let it be admitted, for argument, that Dr. Price approved the Republican Government of America; that he even thought superior happiness was attainable in a society so constituted, than under a Monarchal Government like that of Britain. Yet, in perfect consistence with this supposition, he may have been adverse, in speculation and in practice, to any Republican innovation here. He may have thought our limited Monarchy better adapted to a rich, luxurious, and extensive country like this, in which, though property be widely diffused, it is yet divided, in not a few instances, with great inequality: he may have thought that a moderate Reform was all that could be hoped, from pacific exertions; and greater changes were impracticable, without plunging the country into calamities too horrid to be compensated by any form of Government whatever. Such may have been the light in which the question was considered, *at this time*, by the mild and venerable Price; and his Correspondence, here published, confirms the supposition.

But if this were his settled way of thinking in 1785, how great is the improbability that he had changed his sentiments in 1790, and turned his endeavours to effect a Revolution here, after recent experience had taught him how little disposed the Nation was, when lulled by Peace, to support even that moderate scheme of Reform which the Minister himself had brought forward.

It is true that the more recent Revolution in France had re-animated the hopes of our moderate Reformers, and Dr. Price had expressed with them his exultation at the rising spirit of Liberty in England, and the fall of Despotism in France. It may be true that some enthusiastic men had then formed extravagant hopes, or even criminal designs of a Revolution here. But, on such

grounds,

vernment can give. This, therefore, is the very criſis of the Cauſe; ſince, if the patriotic zeal diſplayed by the Miniſter and his friends on this occaſion is well ſupported by the People, it cannot fail to obtain immediate ſucceſs, or at leaſt to ſecure ſucceſs at no very diſtant period; and, on the other hand, if the People of England can view with indifference this noble exertion of zeal for reſtoring the true ſpirit of the Conſtitution, and leave the

grounds, it would be highly uncandid to rank Dr. Price with theſe raſh Innovators. His advanced age, his political experience, his cool and calculating head, his moderation during the ſtruggle for Reform, his temper, his habits, his virtues, all forbid the ſuſpicion. Againſt the combined force of theſe conſiderations, what would it have availed Mr. Burke, in leſs heated times, that Dr. Price had publicly expreſſed a wiſh that the Parliament of Britain might become a National Aſſembly? inſtead of that mockery of Repreſentation, which in this Letter he condemns. In more equitable times a glowing word would have been eaſily excuſed; a conciſe ſententious phraſe, innocent in one ſenſe, deeply criminal in another, would have been conſtrued in the obvious and inoffenſive ſenſe; and the long-eſtabliſhed character of a good man would have been unimpaired by the malignant cavils of his Accuſer.—Or what blame, what ſuſpicion could have been fixed on Dr. Price, in any times but thoſe of extreme infatuation, for having maintained that the Britiſh Government ſtands on the ground of *Public Conſent*, and that a Government ſtanding on that ground muſt be liable to modification or change by the ſame authority to which it owed its exiſtence. Theſe are the doctrines of the moſt ſincere Defenders of our Conſtitution from the age of Locke to that of Price. In ſuch wiſhes and opinions there is neither Treaſon nor Sedition; and that he publicly uttered them, furniſhes not the ſhade of a pretence to charge this excellent Man with revolutionary deſigns. In times uncommonly jealous, the miſrepreſentations of his eloquent, but moſt paſſionate Adverſary, did ſucceed, and in ſuch times only they could have ſucceeded to render Dr. Price an object of public diſtruſt. His feeling mind was too much hurt by the unmerited inſults of his Opponent, and the injuſtice of the Public, and his grey hairs were ſoon brought with ſorrow to the grave. He died the victim of Calumny and Political Intolerance; but Poſterity will do him juſtice.

Miniſter to ſtruggle in their cauſe without the ſupport of their voice at Public Meetings, to their own ſupineneſs let them impute the failure that in that caſe muſt be unavoidable. I truſt the Nation is not ſo loſt to Virtue and Public Spirit, ſo ripe for General Corruption and the conſequent Ruin of the State; but, whatever may be the general diſpoſition, I am perſuaded the worthy Freeholders of Cambridgeſhire will not be found wanting in a juſt and determined Reſolution to give their concurrence to ſuch reaſonable Propoſitions on the ſubject of Reform, as you, Sir, and the other firm and decided Friends of that meaſure may bring forward at a County Meeting. I take the liberty to ſpeak thus ſanguinely on the ſubject, knowing your zealous attachment to the Cauſe, and that of a very conſiderable Body of Freeholders in the County; by whoſe zeal, it ſeems probable the reſt of the Freeholders may be induced to ſupport the great Queſtion, if a General Meeting ſhould be called. I moſt heartily wiſh ſucceſs to your exertions in favour of the Common Cauſe, and remain, with great reſpect,

Sir,

Your moſt faithful

humble ſervant,

C. WYVILL. *

* The Editor had written to Mr. Holick on the 20th of December, 1784, to communicate Mr. Pitt's patriotic intention. Mr. Holick's Letter in reply was dated January 8th, 1785; from which, to avoid unneceſſary repetitions, it will be ſufficient to inſert the following ſhort Extract: " The information contained in

Paper IX.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* DARREL TRELAWNEY, Esq.

NEROT's HOTEL, KING's-STREET, ST. JAMES's, *Jan.* 27, 1785.

SIR,

BEFORE I learnt your Address from Mr. Hawkins, the Declaration which Mr. Pitt allowed me to make, of his intention to support the business of Parliamentary Reform, *as a Minister, honestly and boldly*, to the utmost of his power, had been thrown into the Public Papers. But though I have been anticipated in this respect, by the precipitance of some zealous, but mistaken Friends, I am happy to take the earliest opportunity to assure you, this manly step of Mr. Pitt's has made an impression on the County of York, adequate, in some degree, to the great importance of the business, and the noble disinterested zeal of the Minister who means to support it.

I have just received information from the Sheriff of Yorkshire, that, at the Requisition of about fourscore Gentlemen of the County,

your obliging favour of the 20th ult. gave me great pleasure, and well agrees with Mr. Pitt's former professions, particularly those in a Letter I had the honour to receive from him last March; in which he says, 'I beg leave to assure you, that my zeal for a Reform in Parliament is by no means abated; and that I will ever exert my best endeavours to accomplish that important object'."

he has appointed the 10th of February for a General Meeting of the Freeholders, in order to give them an opportunity to declare their ſenſe upon the Queſtion of Parliamentary Reformation. And from an extenſive correſpondence in different parts of Yorkſhire, I feel myſelf fully authoriſed to aſſure you, Sir, that I cannot entertain a moment's doubt but the intended Petition to the Houſe of Commons for *a more equal Repreſentation* will be ſupported by a greater and a more deciſive majority of the County, than that which appeared in favour of the ſame Queſtion on any former occaſion. It would undoubtedly be a moſt encouraging circumſtance, if the Gentlemen of Cornwall are diſpoſed to concur in a ſimilar meaſure, and information of that diſpoſition could be communicated, *on good authority*, to the Meeting on the 10th of February. But if matters are not yet advanced ſo far in Cornwall, it would, however, give great ſatisfaction to hear the Friends of Political Reformation are uſing their endeavours to obtain a Meeting of the County of Cornwall.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient

humble Servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper X.

Paper X.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* JOHN BAYNES, Eſq; *in anſwer to a* Letter *from* Him, *incloſing one ſuppoſed to be written by the* Rev. Mr. FOSTER *of* Cornwall.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Jan.* 27, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE no objection to give you my opinion on the contents of the incloſed Letter without reſerve; but I hope that you and your Friend from whom that Letter was received, will do me the juſtice to believe I give it with diffidence; becauſe I am aware, there may be circumſtances of difficulty not explained in your Correſpondent's Letter, which diſſuade a County Meeting at this time in Cornwall. My judgment, however, on the circumſtances known to me, is extremely different. I recollect that a Petition for a Reform of Parliament was ſigned a few years ago, by a great majority of the Freeholders of Cornwall, though the power of Government was then lodged in hands moſt inimical to that Reform. I cannot, therefore, think it a probable ſuppoſition, that late events have ſo weakened the argument for Political Reformation, that if the ſenſe of the Freeholders of Cornwall were again taken on that queſtion, it would be found materially changed, and in diſfavour of the Queſtion, when Government appears to be in good earneſt diſpoſed to ſup-

port it. If I miſtake not, the two County Members are friendly to the meaſure of Reformation, and were elected *on that account*. To me, therefore, it appears as if the objections to a County-Meeting in Cornwall were rather the pleas of languor, and diſtruſt of the Miniſter's intentions, than arguments reſulting from any real conviction that the ſenſe of the County of Cornwall is leſs favourable, than it lately was, to the Reformation of Parliament.

Languor is indeed natural after the long ſtruggle ſupported by the People, and particularly, after the great exertions made againſt the Coalition laſt year; in which, however, I know not that Cornwall bore any great part. The various unavailing Revolutions alſo which we have ſeen, for ſome years, undoubtedly tend to produce general deſpondence, and a dereliction of the Public Cauſe. But, from late experience in Yorkſhire, I can truly affirm that ſuch languor, ſuch deſpondence, may be rouzed to action by the exertions of a very few, who will apply to it with vigour.

Reſpecting the Miniſter's ſincerity, the debate on Tueſday evening ſeems to put that beyond a queſtion, if my Letter did not do it before. For my own part, ſince I have had the honour of being acquainted with Mr. Pitt, I never doubted his Public Virtue; and if I had before entertained ſome doubts, the converſations I have held with him this winter on theſe ſubjects muſt have convinced me, he is a moſt zealous Friend to the Conſtitution in its genuine ſenſe and ſpirit; *Diſintereſted* and

magnanimous

magnanimous as his Father, in *prudence and addreſs* he ſeems to excel him. If the People of England are not utterly ſunk and loſt to every ſentiment of genuine patriotiſm, they will lend him their aſſiſtance. And thus aſſiſted, I truſt, he will carry into execution an improved ſyſtem of Reformation which Lord Chatham had never ſeen a poſſibility to attain.

To return to the main queſtion—my opinion is, that this is the very criſis of the Cauſe—that on this occaſion, every effort ſhould be made to bring the People forward; and that from paſt experience, it may be expected thoſe efforts in Cornwall will be attended with ſucceſs. I am,

Dear Sir,

Moſt cordially your's,

C. WYVILL. *

* The endeavour in this and the preceding Letter to animate the Gentlemen of Cornwall, through Mr. Foſter, and Mr. Trelawney, proved ineffectual, though Mr. Temple's worthy friend, Mr. Hawkins, now Sir Chriſtopher Hawkins, concurred in the wiſh, that the application of that County to Parliament might be renewed, in ſupport of the Miniſter's patriotic meaſure.

The aſſiſtance given on this occaſion by Mr. Baynes, in communicating Mr. Foſter's Letter, and reinforcing the Editor's opinion, by ſimilar exhortations to his reſpectable friend, was the laſt inſtance of that friendly zeal, which had ſo often prompted him to co-operate with the Editor. Not long after this time, a fatal diſorder ſeized him, the conſequence of a life too ſedentary, and of an occaſional indulgence in exerciſe too violent; and hurried him in a few days from that ſcene of buſineſs at the Bar, in which he was furniſhed with every accompliſhment to make a diſtinguiſhed figure. By the death of this young Lawyer, the Public Cauſe loſt an able, eloquent, and virtuous Advocate; and the Editor was deprived of a Friend whom he highly eſteemed, and for whoſe premature loſs he feels, after ſo many years, the ſincereſt regret.

Paper XI.

Note *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* BENJAMIN VAUGHAN, Esq.

MR. Wyvill preſents his compliments to Mr. B. Vaughan, and perfectly agrees with him in thinking, for the reaſons he has given, that the Friends of Political Reformation in the City of London ought not to be precipitate in their intended movement. How much the Common Cauſe muſt ſuffer, how much the dignity of the City of London muſt be degraded in the Public opinion, if that opinion is to be formed on the reſpectability of a late Meeting, and the meaſure adopted by it, is ſufficiently evident.* Mr. Vaughan and his Friends are agreed that ſomething muſt be done to counteract the miſchievous effect of a meaſure ſo ſlight and trifling, adopted by a Meeting ſo inſignificant, when compared with the whole Livery of London. There is a neceſſity, therefore, for a more extenſive communication of our friends, and efforts better combined, that a more conſiderable Aſſembly of the Livery may be obtained, and a more efficacious meaſure may be carried.—When a numerous Common-Hall ſhall have petitioned Parliament for a Reform in the

* Between 200 and 300 Liverymen formed the Common-Hall alluded to. They adopted no Petition: but as the Editor thinks, they agreed to ſome ſlight declaratory Reſolution, or Inſtruction.

Repre-

Repreſentation, Petitions from the Freeholders of the City, and the Tower Hamlets, and from the other unrepreſented Inhabitants, will eaſily follow. Then the Metropolis will recover that weight and conſequence which it poſſeſſed on a former occaſion of much importance; and probably will be able, by its great caſting-weight, to incline the Parliamentary ſcale in favour of Reformation.*

With reſpect to the propriety of an Addreſs to the Throne *at preſent*, Mr. Wyvill begs leave to expreſs his wiſh with great earneſtneſs to Mr. Vaughan, that nothing concluſive may be done, *till ſome better opinion than his* can be taken.

* Petitions were obtained from the Inhabitants of the Tower Hamlets, and the unrepreſented Freeholders of London; but the Merchants were too eager in the purſuit of Commercial Advantage, after the long and diſaſtrous War with America, to engage with zeal in the Cauſe of Reformation, even when invited to it by the Miniſter. It ſoon was but too evident that London was indifferent to the meaſure he propoſed.

Paper XII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* M. BOULTON, Esq; *of* Birmingham.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *Jan.* 31, 1785.

Sir,

HAVING underſtood from ſeveral Friends how much you are diſpoſed to give very important aſſiſtance to the Cauſe of Political Reformation, I have great pleaſure in aſſuring you, that the intended Propoſition for a Reform in our Repreſentation, in my opinion, will be not the Propoſal of one Indidual Miniſter, however eminent in the Cabinet, but the meaſure of Government itſelf. From the concluding ſentence in the King's Speech, explained as it was by Mr. Pitt's comment in the Houſe of Commons on Tueſday laſt, it appears, that although the Cabinet did not approve an expreſs recommendation of the meaſure from the Throne, as Mr. Pitt had adviſed, yet they did approve a very intelligible intimation from the Throne, that the King's aſſent would not be withheld, if the Propoſal met the approbation of the two Houſes of Parliament. From converſation with different men in power, before the Meeting of Parliament, I was ſatisfied this was the diſpoſition of the Cabinet; and I am happy to find from what has paſſed in Parliament, ſince the opening of the Seſſion, that the fact may juſtly be conſidered *as paſt a doubt.*

It

It is evident, how much the proſpect of ſucceſs is improved by this noble conduct of Adminiſtration; it would be ſuperfluous, therefore, to enlarge upon it at preſent; but one ſhort obſervation I cannot omit, which is this: while the buſineſs of Reformation, however neceſſary it might be thought by ſome former Miniſters, was not adopted by Government, many rational and cautious Men were apprehenſive that meaſures of a doubtful or even of a dangerous tendency might be preſſed by ſome Popular Aſſemblies; and conſequently they declined giving ſuch Aſſemblies their countenance and ſupport. But when the correction of Parliamentary Abuſes is avowedly taken up as one of the principal objects of Adminiſtration, the danger of Innovation ſeems wholly to vaniſh; more eſpecially when the attachment of this Adminiſtration *to the Conſtitution in all its branches* has been evinced, by recent tranſactions, to the full ſatisfaction of the Nation. That Government ſhould undertake the taſk of Reformation, for ſome years was more to be wiſhed than expected; but as the ſupport of the Cabinet may now be relied on, rational and cautious Men may be aſſured, that the meaſure countenanced by that authority will be a temperate meaſure; though I have no heſitation to declare my opinion that Mr. Pitt's ſpecific Plan of Reformation, if carried in its full extent, will be an Improvement by which the Repreſentation of the People will be rendered more fair and adequate than it has been in any former period.

period. But highly probable as it ſeems to be, that immediate ſucceſs may attend the honeſt efforts of Adminiſtration, yet that probability wholly reſts upon the ſuppoſition that the Body of the Nation will give their concurrence and ſupport. Without *that*, not only this generous attempt of Mr. Pitt to ſecure the Conſtitution in its genuine ſenſe and ſpirit, may be defeated, but by the artifice of Faction the Nation may be deprived of all his other Plans for the benefit of his Country. In this light I truſt the neceſſity of an effectual ſupport to this important meaſure will appear to the Public at large. In this light, I am ſure, it is conſidered in Yorkſhire, where I venture already to ſay a moſt deciſive majority of the County will concur in the intended Petition. I only beg leave to add, that, if by your aſſiſtance, and that of Mr. Garbutt, and other Gentlemen who are well-wiſhers to a temperate Reformation of Parliament, a Petition can be obtained from the opulent town of Birmingham, unanimouſly paſſed, or nearly ſo, it will probably contribute more to the final ſucceſs of the Cauſe than if a ſimilar co-operation were given by any other Diſtrict which has not yet declared in favour of it.*

I am, Sir, with great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL. †

* A duplicate of this Letter was ſent to Samuel Garbutt, Eſq.

† The political ſentiments of the two Gentlemen to whom this Letter was addreſſed perhaps had been ſtated too favourably to the Editor; or perhaps they actually entertained the ſentiments aſcribed to

Paper XIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to an* Inhabitant *of* Cambridge.

Burton-Hall, *Feb.* 14, 1785.

Dear Sir,

THE Reſolutions of your Cambridgeſhire Conſtitutional Society, which you had the goodneſs to communicate in your Letter, not dated, I had ſeen before with ſome concern in the Public Papers. Inactivity on the part of the People, when Government is well diſpoſed to the Cauſe of Reformation, is not

to them, but had found that their friends among the Churchmen of Birmingham were leſs ſolicitous than themſelves to ſecure Public Liberty, and the Integrity of Parliament, and even then were unwilling to co-operate for theſe moſt valuable ends with the more decided Friends of Reform, particularly with Mr. Ruſſel, the reſpectable Friend and Co-Exile of Dr. Prieſtley. However that may be, certain it is that no anſwer to this Letter was received by the Editor; and ſoon after the date of it, he was informed by Mr. Ruſſel that no Petition for Reform was to be expected from Birmingham.

The Ex-Miniſter of Corruption was aware of this circumſtance, and of a ſimilar want of zeal in Mancheſter, and other great unrepreſented Towns; and when the motion for Reforming the Repreſentation was made by Mr. Pitt, he ably availed himſelf of it. Affecting ignorance, he deſired that the Clerk of the Commons Houſe "might read the Petitions from the Towns of Birmingham and Mancheſter." He was told, that they had preſented no Petition. Leeds and Sheffield alſo had preſented none. By this artifice a willing Senate was taught to reſiſt Reform though preſſed by the Miniſter. If the People are indifferent to the change, if they diſregard the privilege he would grant, ſurely, exclaimed the Adverſary of Reform, Parliament will not obtrude the boon, and raſhly innovate, before the People aſk it.

the way to carry it. Neither the People alone, nor Government alone can poſſibly ſucceed againſt the numerous party of Corruption, but their *joint* efforts *may*. Since then the preſent Government is undoubtedly friendly to the meaſure intended by Mr. Pitt, I conceive *this* to be the very criſis of the Cauſe, which calls for the utmoſt legal efforts of the true Friends of the Conſtitution. I do not mean to adviſe ſo unreaſonable a proceeding, as to expreſs any approbation of a ſpecific Plan which is yet unknown. But from what Mr. Pitt has lately declared, and what he formerly brought forward in the Houſe of Commons, it can hardly admit a doubt, that his Plan, if carried, will be a very material improvement of the Conſtitution. It certainly has the approbation of the Duke of Richmond; and if, after that, I may without the imputation of preſumption mention my own opinion, I have no heſitation to aſſure you, that, ſhould the Plan be accompliſhed in its full extent, it will place the Repreſentation of the People upon a more fair and advantageous footing than it has been at any time. To aſſiſt him in this diſintereſted and virtuous attempt, the mode of petitioning Parliament in *General Terms* ſeems to be proper and adviſeable. On the 10th inſt. the County of York agreed to ſuch a *General Petition*; and on the 12th, a ſimilar Petition was adopted by the City of York. The Meetings of the County and the City were, each of them, uncommonly numerous,

numerous, and the meaſure adopted by each was carried with unanimity. I conceive, therefore, that this County has given its teſtimony in favour of Reformation as fully and explicitly as on any former occaſion. Indeed I am ſatisfied, it is more ſtrongly than ever the ſenſe of Yorkſhire. If the County and Town of Cambridge could concur in a ſimilar meaſure, it would certainly add great weight to the application of the People, and in the ſame proportion increaſe the probability of ſucceſs.*

I am, Sir,
With much reſpect,
Your moſt obedient
humble ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

* Every effort, as the Editor believes, was made by his anonymous Correſpondent, by Mr. Holick, and the other aſſociated Friends of Reform in the Town and County of Cambridge, to ſupport Mr. Pitt by Petitions to Parliament, but without effect.

Paper XIV.

Extract *of a* Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. CHARLES ONLEY.

NEROT'S HOTEL, *March* 14, 1785.

Dear Sir,

THIS morning, through your excellent Friend, Mr. Diſney,* I received your account of the Proceedings at Norwich, in favour of Mr. Pitt's intended Plan of Reformation; and alſo, the difficulty which has ariſen from a Report of Dean Lloyds, and which is likely to prevent ſo numerous a ſignature to the Petition of Norwich as otherwiſe might have been obtained.

The ſuggeſtion I allude to is, "that Petitioning Parliament is the only means of overturning Mr. Pitt; and that, therefore, his real Friends muſt wiſh to oppoſe this meaſure." To this I ſhall only reply, that I have had the honour of frequent converſations with Mr. Pitt, this winter, on the ſubject of Parliamentary Reformation; and I do believe that he is as ſincerely a Friend to it as *we are*, or *could wiſh him to be*: that he conceives the Government cannot go on for any length of

* The late Rev. Samuel Diſney of Halſted in Eſſex, Author of a judicious Tract againſt Pluralities, publiſhed ſome years ago. Mr. Onley was his near neighbour in Eſſex, and an old and much valued Friend of the Editor.

time

time on the honeſt principles according to which he means to act as Miniſter of the Country, unleſs the propoſed Reformation ſhall take place; and that, if the meaſure ſhall not ſucceed on its firſt propoſal this Seſſion, he will certainly make it the great object of his Political Life to accompliſh it.

I am perſuaded, from what I have collected in converſation with Mr. Pitt, that I have here truly repreſented his ſentiments, and the conduct he means to hold; with which the Dean's ſuggeſtion is not conſiſtent; and, I think, if it were traced to its original ſource, it would be found to have proceeded from one who is no ſincere Friend of Mr. Pitt.

Believe me ever,
Dear Sir,
With great eſteem,
Cordially your's,
C. WYVILL. *

* The meaſure which has been the ſubject of this, and the two preceding Numbers, was the moſt important in which the Editor was engaged during the whole courſe of this ſtruggle for Political Reformation. Many of his Letters were ſeen and approved by Mr. Pitt: But he is reſponſible alſo to his Conſtituents, the Aſſociated Freeholders, and the Committee of Yorkſhire. And for their information, he has conſidered himſelf bound to lay before them every material Paper reſpecting his correſpondence on this occaſion, even to ſuperfluity. The Reader, who may be leſs intereſted to obtain minute intelligence, he hopes, will pardon the tautologies in ſeveral of the Letters; becauſe the inſertion of them could not well be avoided, without ſuppreſſing information which may appear material to other Readers. A few Letters, containing nothing to compenſate for their repetitions, have been omitted.

From thoſe which are laid before the Reader, it will be evident that the Nation, on this occaſion, exerted no energy correſponding with the zeal of the Miniſter, or the importance of the propoſed Reform. In London, from various motives the meaſure announced

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met with a faint and languid assistance; in Manchester, and other great unrepresented Towns, it received none. Of the Counties, those of Nottingham and York petitioned for Reform; but the rest, the Editor believes, were silent.

Hence it appears that Mr. Pitt, unsupported by the Nation, was unable to overcome the Retainers of Monarchial Power, and the Adherents of Corruption. And thus, by the almost equal indifference and inaction of both the landed and commercial interests, the golden opportunity was missed to secure Constitutional Liberty, and perpetuate our mixed form of Government on its true principles. The Reform proposed was more extensive than Lord Chatham had seen a possibility to attain; it would have been an efficacious Reform; it would have placed the highest improvements within our reach; and yet the view of these inestimable benefits, thought possible and sincerely attempted by his Son, excited little zeal in the Public; and the great majority of the People, sunk in supine insensibility, suffered their *vein generous Advocate* to plead their cause in vain, because he pleaded it without their declared concurrence. Oh, unfortunate error! Oh, fatal presage of greater Infatuation yet to come!

NUMBER

NUMBER XL.

Paper I.

Intended Circular Letter *from the* Chairman *to the* Members *of the* Yorkſhire Committee.

BURTON-HALL, *Jan.* 8, 1786.

Sir,

I Beg leave to acquaint you, that it is requiſite for the ſettlement of private buſineſs that a Meeting of the Yorkſhire Committee ſhould be held at no great diſtance of time. But as reaſons for a Meeting have occurred to me, which ſeem to be of much greater moment than thoſe I have here alluded to, I think it my duty to ſtate them fully to you, and to the other Members of the Committee.

In the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, the meritorious attempt of the Miniſter to improve our ſyſtem of Popular Repreſentation was not ſupported by the People themſelves with that firmneſs and vigour which alone can afford a rational expectation of ſucceſs. On that occaſion, indeed, the County of York acted with its uſual zeal and energy, neither exhauſted

by the great Political exertions it had made, during the five preceding years, nor diſcouraged by the formidable numbers which *a corrupt*, or *a ſtrangely prejudiced* majority of Parliament had oppoſed to every Propoſition tending to Reform our Repreſentation. In the ſame laudable purſuit, and with equal zeal to reſtore and perpetuate the true principles of the Conſtitution, the County of Nottingham, and ſeveral reſpectable Cities and Towns concurred with the County of York. But the great maſs of the Nation, inſtead of being animated by theſe examples, remained ſilent and inactive during that whole Seſſion, although Mr. Pitt's intention to agitate the Queſtion of Reformation had been previouſly declared, and many circumſtances had been fortunately combined, which muſt have ſecured a ſucceſsful iſſue to that enterpriſe, if the happy opportunity had not been then neglected by the Public itſelf.

Since the cloſe of the laſt Seſſion, I fear no favourable change in the diſpoſition of the Nation has taken place. The Plan propoſed by Mr. Pitt has indeed offered a new ſyſtem of Repreſentation which muſt be admitted to be intrinſically much better than the preſent arrangement; it has even approached as near to theoretical perfection as in the actual ſtate of property, public manners, and other material circumſtances would be practicable, or perhaps deſirable. In a Houſe of Commons ſo conſtituted, ample ſecurity would be found againſt that ſhameful corruption of Parliament,

ment, which is the bane of our Conſtitution; and this inеſtimable advantage would be gained at a price that ſcarcely would exceed the expences of a fortnight during the heat of the American War. In the view of reaſon, therefore, it might ſeem probable, that a Plan ſo beneficial would ſoon receive that warm and general ſupport which muſt have born down all oppoſition, eſpecially as the change was propoſed when the heavy burthens, unavoidably laid upon the Country, furniſhed a ſtrong additional proof of the neceſſity of the meaſure. But experience has ſhewn how fallacious thoſe expectations were. The various dangers and diſtreſſes in which the Corruption of Parliament had involved us, and from which we have had ſo recent a deliverance, appear to be already forgotten. The ſtorms which threatened ſhipwreck to the State have blown over; and the only wiſh of the Public ſeems to be, to enjoy the preſent gleam of proſperity, without conſidering the cauſes of our paſt misfortunes, and without taking the trouble to inquire by what means the far greater evils may be averted which thoſe cauſes, if ſtill ſuffered to exiſt, muſt ultimately produce.

In this ſtate of apparent indifference to their deareſt intereſt, it were in vain to urge our Countrymen to any vigorous Conſtitutional effort: another attempt more feebly ſupported than the laſt would but remove ſucceſs to a ſtill greater diſtance; Parliament, accuſtomed to reject the moſt reaſonable Propoſitions of Reformation, would probably perſiſt in the refuſal

with augmented obſtinacy; and the People, diſpirited by frequent defeats, would perhaps renounce as a hopeleſs and impracticable ſcheme that attempt to Reform Parliament, which ſooner or later muſt ſucceed, or the Liberties of our Country muſt be deſtroyed.

If then it would be diſadvantageous to the Common Cauſe, *in the preſent temper of the Nation*, to preſs any farther application to Parliament, I ſee not why the Committee ſhould not meet, and aſſign that reaſon to their Conſtituents, for adjourning *ſine die*; on the contrary, I think ſuch conduct would be manly and candid, and would cloſe the labours of the Committee with propriety.—That the Gentlemen who compoſe that Body will again chearfully devote their moſt vigorous exertions to promote the Reſtoration of the Conſtitution, whenever the general voice of their Country ſhall call for their co-operation, cannot juſtly be doubted; but when a languid acquieſcence, under the worſt Conſtitutional abuſes, ſeems to be the prevailing diſpoſition, to renew the attempt would be enthuſiaſtic folly; and, under ſuch circumſtances, to prolong the exiſtence of the Committee, or, which is nearly equivalent, to prolong its capacity to act, when it no longer can act with efficacy, to promote the genuine purpoſe of its appointment, would be an imprudence which would but confirm thoſe jealouſies, and that averſion from popular Aſſemblies, which have been the chief impediments to the ſucceſs of our undertaking. To re-

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ſign the Truſt committed to us, when we ceaſe to hope it may be exerciſed with advantage to the Cauſe of Reformation, would be the ſureſt means to appeaſe thoſe jealouſies, and to conquer that averſion. Even our Adverſaries will acknowledge that we have acted with a zealous regard to the principles of the Conſtitution, and with undeviating fidelity to the Commiſſion of our Conſtituents; that we have perſevered in promoting the objects of our appointment with diſintereſted integrity, and not without ſucceſs in ſeveral reſpects of great importance to the Country. With the general approbation of our Conſtituents for our paſt conduct we are ſure to retire; and when the ſeaſon for action ſhall return, as return it undoubtedly will, we may confidently hope the County of York will then enable their Committee, under a new appointment, to recommence the ſtruggle for Political Reformation, with better hopes, with freſh vigour, and with a more general concurrence of their Countrymen.

If theſe ſentiments ſhould be fortunate enough to meet your approbation, I ſhall hope to receive your Requiſition to call a Meeting of the Committee "to conſider the propriety of an Adjournment, *ſine die*, and alſo other buſineſs* of importance.

I am, Sir,

Your moſt faithful

and obedient ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

* Viz. The payment of the Debts of the Committee.

Paper II.

Joint Letter *by* WILLIAM BURGH, Esq; LL.D. *and the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON, *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE ſeen, and, to the beſt of my power upon ſo ſhort a notice, conſidered your Letter to the Gentlemen upon the Committee of Aſſociation. The opinion I have formed, or rather the doubts that ariſe in my mind upon the propriety of the meaſure you propoſe, I will accordingly ſtate to you. That I take the liberty thus to queſtion what has had the ſanction of your judgment, I am confident you will pardon. You will even adopt my reaſonings, if you think them prudent; but if not, I muſt requeſt that you will not conceive me more tenacious than I have here ſuppoſed you to be, but believe that I am ready to defer, and that too with the utmoſt reſpect, to whatever you ſhall upon re-conſideration reſolve.

In the firſt place, then, an adjournment, *ſine die*, muſt either mean a diſſolution of the Committee of Aſſociation, or it muſt not; but if it does not, it does nothing; for, upon the preſent ſyſtem, the Committee always adjourns *ſine die*, reſerving, it is true, the power originally conferred by the County, of occaſionally reconvening itſelf. But if this is ſtill to be reſerved, the preſent propoſition is, at the leaſt, unneceſſary, becauſe there is no imaginable change effected by it. But

But if, on the contrary, the Adjournment, *ſine die*, be intended to diſſolve the Committee, this power is relinquiſhed, and a truſt confided ſolemnly by the whole body of the Aſſociators, is not returned to them, with an account of the manner in which it has been diſcharged, but is actually abandoned.

Mr. Maſon, who is juſt come in, approves what I have written, thinks it impoſſible that the Committee can diſſolve itſelf, *ſine die*, in this latter ſenſe of mine, till Mr. Gray has been ordered by a Sub-Committee to write to all the Members of the firſt Committee, including Seceders, to charge them with their reſpective debts up to the day of their deceſſions, and till he has received either their ſubſcriptions or their refuſals. He is perfectly convinced that many refuſals will be made, and therefore the neceſſity of a ſecond Sub-Committee is obvious. When this buſineſs is ſettled, then, and not till then, he thinks a General Committee can only do with propriety what you wiſh them to do in your Letter, and this matter of paying debts he thinks the firſt conſideration, and ſhould be put into a train immediately, though he knows not how to do it with propriety, without you adviſe upon the ſubject. There are many perſons who have not paid the laſt ſubſcription but one; on ſome of theſe, who are the beſt affected to the cauſe, the ſubſcription will fall heavy, and he wiſhes much that you were at the Sub-Committee in perſon, to conſider the politeſt method of excuſing ſuch perſons from payment. It

It is alſo perfectly clear, that to expect a numerous Committee to meet at this ſeaſon of the year, when the principal purpoſe of this Meeting is declared to be an Adjournment, *ſine die*, is abſolutely vain. If the buſineſs of paying debts could be ſettled by a ſmall Sub-Committee at preſent, a more reſpectable General Committee might be hoped for in the ſpring, for the final concluſion (if even then the final concluſion be deſirable or right) of the matter; but of this he joins with me in doubting, and rather thinks that it ought to ſink of itſelf, unleſs raiſed again by the ſpur of ſome future occaſion.

You would have had this Letter ſooner, but we were froſt-bound with Mr. Duncombe at Copgrove, and came away only yeſterday morning, juſt after your Letter to him arrived. We have conſulted Mr. J. Robinſon, who is alſo ſtrongly of opinion that the debts, which amount to more than ſix hundred pounds, ſhould be ſettled with the greateſt ſpeed, which this meaſure of your's would certainly retard. We beg, therefore, to know whether you can come over to meet a few of us, reſident in York, which we heartily wiſh; or if not, requeſt that you would give us your advice how to act on this occaſion.

We are, with the greateſt eſteem,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient ſervants,

WM. BURGH.*

York, *Jan.* 11, 1786. WM. MASON.

* The late Chief Baron Burgh was brother, and Mr. Foſter, Speaker of the laſt Houſe of Commons of Ireland, is brother-in-

law

P. S. Till we have your anſwer, we have ventured to ſtop Mr. Gray's committing your Letter to the preſs. If you come, the middle of next week will be a very proper time.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* William Burgh, Eſq; LL. D.

Burton-Hall, *Jan.* 15, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you and Mr. Maſon for your joint Letter of the 11th inſtant, which I received laſt night.—I perfectly agree with you both, that before a Reſolution of Adjournment, *ſine die*, ſhould be adopted by the Committee, or even propoſed as the ſubject of their deliberation, it ought to be clearly underſtood that the meaſure is not inconſiſtent with the Conſtitution of the Committee, ſince, if it be contrary to that, no ſuppoſable ſitua-

law of Dr. Burgh. But he is, and he ought to be better known as an able Writer, and one of the very Learned Men of the preſent age. Not being a Freeholder of Yorkſhire, he could not be a Member of the Committee; but he was a Friend to the meaſures which the Committee was appointed to promote. He was frequently conſulted in the courſe of their exertions, and his aſſiſtance on ſeveral occaſions was uſeful to the Cauſe of Political Reformation.

Some years after the date of this Letter, his ſentiments underwent a change ſimilar to the change which took place, about the ſame time, in the opinions of Mr. Maſon. The Editor feels himſelf the more obliged to Dr. Burgh for his conſent to the publication of this Letter, and particularly for the frank and candid manner in which it was given.

tion

tion of affairs can render it expedient. This is undoubtedly a conſideration of ſome nicety, as well as of great importance. Difficulties indeed preſent themſelves on every ſide, whatever be the conduct propoſed; whether that the Committee ſhould meet no more, but ſilently die away, or that it ſhould meet to adjourn, *ſine die*, or to call a County Meeting, in order to receive its diſſolution from that power which gave it exiſtence. I am ſtill inclined to think, however, that the meaſure of an Adjournment, *ſine die*, may be cleared from the objections which have occurred to you and Mr. Maſon, and may be found to be the moſt adviſable which in the preſent inſtance can be propoſed.

With reſpect to regularity, and ſtrictneſs of propriety, the advantage lies wholly on the ſide for calling a County Meeting, to report the neceſſity of deſiſting from any further attempt to accompliſh a Reformation of Parliament, and to propoſe the Diſſolution of the Committee. But, in the preſent temper of the County, to call a Meeting for thoſe purpoſes would be extremely inexpedient. Few perſons would approve a County Meeting, called only to effect a regular Diſſolution of the Committee; the reaſons for it, drawn from the nature of the Deputation, would be little felt; the Meeting would be ill, if at all attended, and a degree of ridicule would be thrown upon the cloſe of this popular enterpriſe, which would by no means promote the ſucceſs of a ſimilar undertaking hereafter,

when

when a new Deputation by the County might be thought adviſable. I imagine there can be little doubt of the impropriety of a County Meeting; therefore, laying aſide that idea, we ſhall find the whole difficulty reduced within the compaſs of this queſtion: When it is evident that nothing more can be done by the Committee in purſuance of its appointment, and when it would be imprudent to call the Freeholders together merely to diſſolve the Committee, which is the moſt eligible conduct, to deſiſt from the proſecution of the end for which the Committee was appointed, *with or without* giving any reaſon for it to our Conſtituents? The queſtion thus ſtated carries its anſwer with it; the reaſons which convince us, would probably convince our Conſtituents, and therefore they ought to be given. To adjourn *ſine die*, after having paſſed ſome explanatory reſolutions, would be to deſiſt in this mode. It would not be a diſſolution of the Committee, for to that the County alone is competent; but it would differ totally from the former Adjournments, by omitting to provide any regular means for the re-aſſembling of that Body, in conſequence of which omiſſion the Committee would be rendered inefficient, though not abſolutely extinct. The effect would be the ſame; the difference would only reſpect a matter of form, on which, in the preſent manifeſt indiſpoſition of the County to meet, it ſurely would not be prudent to inſiſt.

But

But you apprehend ſuch a meaſure would be conſidered as an abandonment of the Cauſe. Care muſt be taken, in wording the previous Reſolutions, to guard as much as poſſible againſt that miſconſtruction. It would be difficult to draw up an Addreſs to our Conſtituents that would obtain the approbation of the Committee; but a ſhort, clear, ſtrong Paper of that kind, would obviate all poſſibility of miſapprehenſion. Even an order to print the intended Letter connected with the Requiſition, the ſubſequent Call, and the Reſolutions of the Committee, would probably leave little danger that ſo falſe an idea of our conduct could be formed by any conſiderate and impartial man. And whatever may be the miſrepreſentations of men of a different character, our Conſtituents and the Nation at large will certainly do us the juſtice to acknowledge we have ſupported the Cauſe with fidelity, and deſiſted only when uninterrupted perſeverance would have been evidently imprudent and diſſerviceable. And if in a few years the diſpoſition of the Nation ſhould appear better fitted for the renewal of this arduous enterpriſe, it is probable we ſhould be able to act with greater efficacy under a new appointment than would be poſſible under the old. On ſuch an emergency, many perſons who never would enter into the preſent Committee, under the previous qualification of having ſigned the Aſſociation, &c. would readily join us in forming a new bond of union,

whoſe

whose aim would be the attainment of the objects of the Association. And by this timely separation of the Committee, the prejudices of many would be abated, if not entirely removed, who have hitherto been jealous that such a Deputation would be abused, and applied to sinister ends, the influencing of County Elections, or other purposes not intended by the original appointment.

I have only farther to observe, that in a Constitutional view it would be wrong to continue the Committee under such circumstances as I have here supposed. When the objects of the Trust cannot be fulfilled, the possibility of the misapplication of our powers ought not to be hazarded by keeping the Committee embodied, and in a capacity to act; nor ought the example to be set of such a popular Deputation continued, as the case may be, for four, five, or *seven* years, without returning to the Constituent Body for their approbation, which would be inconsistent with the principles on which we demand a shorter Duration of Parliament.

This seems to determine the question whether we ought not to adjourn *sine die*, stating our reasons to our Constituents in an Address, in Resolutions, or in some other form which may be preferred: for if the regular Dissolution of the Committee be inadmissible from the apparent inexpediency of a County Meeting, the Adjournment remains the best practicable measure. In a Constitutional view, as well as on every consideration of policy or expedience,

expedience, I think it appears clearly more eligible to deſiſt in this mode, than tacitly to relinquiſh the Truſt, and yet not relinquiſh the power of doing evil, when the power of doing good is clearly loſt.

If you and Mr. Maſon ſhould concur with me in this opinion, the intended Circular Letter may be ſent by Mr. Gray, and if a Requiſition ſhould ſoon be produced by it, I would fix ſome day in the next Aſſize Week for the Meeting, which, with any tolerable exertions on the part of our leading Friends, would ſecure a very reſpectable Committee. But if your doubts reſpecting the propriety of this meaſure ſhould not be removed, I beg the Letter may remain where it is, for I have too high an opinion of your judgment and Mr. Maſon's, and of your fidelity to the true Popular Cauſe, to riſque a ſtep on this ground without your joint approbation and concurrence.

I wiſh to add, and yet perhaps it is ſuperfluous, that when I ſpeak of relinquiſhing the Truſt, I mean the power intruſted to us by the County of York to ſolicit Parliament, and take other legal ſteps, as Agents for the County, to promote the deſired Reformation. This power, I think, may be properly relinquiſhed; or, we may ceaſe to act as a Committee, whenever our continuing to act would injure the Cauſe; and this I extend, not only to the mere ceſſation from action, but alſo to the termination of the capacity to act, under the preſent

present appointment. But to relinquish the Association, or to cease to endeavour to promote the success of it, is what I neither recommend to others, nor mean to practice myself. On the contrary, when ever the proper emergency occurs, my intention is to promote a new Deputation for carrying into execution a Reformation of Parliament *on the principles of the Association*, and at all times to assist the Cause to the utmost of my power.

Believe me ever,

Dear Sir,

With the most perfect esteem and regard,

Sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to the* Rev. William Mason.

Buxton-Hall, *Jan.* 16*th*, 1780.

Dear Sir,

FROM the first County Meeting to the present moment, I have been fortunate enough never to have taken any material step without your concurrence and Dr. Burgh's. The approbation of such Friends has at all times been my pleasure and my pride; and it

has been, on ſome trying occaſions, the chief ſupport and comfort of my mind. If ever I was anxious to preſerve that approbation, I am ſo now, when the queſtions before us are, Whether it be not neceſſary that the Committee ſhould deſiſt from any farther exerciſe of its deputed powers; and if ſo, by what means this firſt act of our political drama may be cloſed with propriety. In my Letter to Dr. Burgh of yeſterday's date, I have explained myſelf at large on this ſubject: I therefore beg to refer you to that Letter, and at the ſame time to aſſure you, that if you ſhould not be ſatisfied that an Adjournment, as there ſtated, would be right, I ſhall acquieſce in your opinions, and preſs the idea no farther.

With reſpect to the debts of the Committee, I entirely concur with you in thinking, that no ſeparation, no reſolution of Adjournment ſhould take place, till all juſt demands have been ſatisfied, either by actual payment; or at leaſt, which would be nearly equivalent, by a tranſfer of the debt from the body of the Committee to ſuch Members of it as might be willing to engage themſelves perſonally for the payment.

In purſuance of this idea, I think it might be proper that Mr. Gray ſhould be directed to draw up a ſtate of the debts incurred by the Committee, to the day when the firſt inſtance occurs of an acting Member's ſeceſſion from the Committee; and alſo another ſtate of

of the debts incurred from that day to the preſent time. A Sub-committee might then aſcertain what proportion of the firſt debt falls to the ſhare of each individual who was a Member of the Committee, till the firſt ſeceſſion took place; and might authoriſe Mr. Gray to requeſt payment of that ſum from every Member, excepting only thoſe perſons who have been uſually excuſed before. A day before the Committee meets, Mr. Gray might diſtinctly ſtate to the Sub-Committee what may have been thus collected, and then the balance of the firſt debt might be added to the ſecond; expences up to that time might alſo be included, and the ſum total might be transferred as a debt from the Committee, to thoſe Members who may chuſe to ſign a bond for the payment of it, on or before that day twelve months; during which period Mr. Gray might receive (but not ſolicit) the proportion which that Sub-Committee might aſcertain to be due from each Member of the Committee at that time. The deficiency would remain to be paid by thoſe who had ſigned the bond.

I think in this way the Seceders might be brought to contribute their reſpective ſhares, and the payment of the debt might be aſcertained within a reaſonable time; and yet thoſe perſons whom, from motives of policy, we ought not to preſs, would be decently excuſed paying: and then the Committee might properly proceed to a vote of Adjournment. If this idea ſhould be adopted by you, I ſhall

readily ſign the bond propoſed, without regarding how few may be willing to join us *.

I am ever,

My dear Sir,

Your's with the greateſt cordiality,

C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

YORK, *Jan.* 23, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I Received your laſt, though written after that to Dr. Burgh, a poſt before, and I have deſired Gray to get the Printers and other Bills in, ſo that the parties indebted may be written to by order of a Sub-Committee, which can only conſiſt of Mr. John Robinſon, Mr. Withers, and myſelf, as no other Aſſociators are in York; but I think all talk of giving bond muſt be poſtponed till what ſubſcriptions can be obtained are got in, otherwiſe many will be glad to throw the whole on thoſe who have given ſuch a haſty bond. I know, however, it is the dernier reſort, and that it muſt be reſorted to, and alſo that

* The payment of the debts of the Committee was ſecured nearly in the manner here propoſed. It appears, that on the 11th of January, 1786, they exceeded 600l. A part of this ſum was collected of the Committee; the deficiency was paid by a few individuals of that Body; but no bond was executed by them.

that I ſhall be as ready as yourſelf to reſort to it, at the proper time.

I am ſorry that what we ſaid to you in our joint Letter has had ſo little weight as to occaſion a ſecond to Dr. Burgh; I have juſt left him, and he has promiſed me to give you our joint reaſons for ſtill withholding our conſent to the intended Circular Letter, which, for my own part, I think will be peculiarly *ill-timed*. You muſt know that the opinion is extremely prevalent that Mr. Pitt meant nothing ſerious by his propoſals concerning a Reform. He has not publiſhed his Bill, which you hoped, and told many perſons he would. The Seſſion is begun, ſo there is no hope now that from him any thing can come which will tend to remove this general prejudice againſt his ſincerity, a prejudice induſtriouſly increaſed by his opponents, and which therefore ſhould not be augmented by any collateral ſtep which his friends may take at this time. Now nothing is more clear to me than that a Letter from you on the ſubject of adjourning, *ſine die*, will give them the ſtrongeſt handle in the world to ridicule him. "Here, (ſay they) even Wyvill gives the matter up; he ſees no poſſible hope of the plan taking place." Now, though all this is falſe, yet be aſſured it will not be without its effect; and I muſt own I have frequently thought that, pleaſed and even carried away by the ideal rectitude of a meaſure, you have not adverted enough to the methods by which your opponents would turn it to a bad purpoſe. In the preſen-

ſent caſe the thing is ſo obvious that I am amaſed you can overlook it.

I write in a hurry, and muſt leave all argument to Dr. Burgh. I will only repeat that it is my firm opinion, "that neither you as Chairman, nor any of us as Members of the Committee, ſhould take at preſent any other ſteps than thoſe which tend to pay our debts, as a body, as ſpeedily as poſſible."

Believe me,
Dear Sir,
Your's moſt ſincerely,
W. MASON.

P. S. I wiſh the weather may permit you to come over before I leave York, which will be next Saturday fortnight.

Paper VI.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

BURTON-HALL, *Feb.* 4, 1786.

My Dear Sir,

IF the Committee had met, I think it probable they would have been nearly, if not entirely unanimous in voting thanks to Mr. Pitt for his propoſal in the laſt Seſſion, to reform Parliament ſubſtantially on the plan adopted in the year 1782 by the County of York. The changes made in that plan by Mr. Pitt were few; ſome of them were plainly more advantageous than the terms propoſed

propoſed by this County, and others were admitted from evident neceſſity to conciliate to the meaſure as many friends as poſſible in the Houſe of Commons; I cannot conceive, therefore, that the Yorkſhire Committee would have negatived ſuch a Motion of Thanks which are certainly due from them to Mr. Pitt; and if the merit of his plan has not been ſufficiently acknowledged by others, it is the more neceſſary that the Committee ſhould do him the juſtice to teſtify their approbation of it: this was with me a collateral reaſon for wiſhing a Meeting of the Committee this ſpring, which added much force, I thought, to the main reaſon, which reſpected the character and reputation of the Committee itſelf.

Another collateral reaſon, of the ſame tendency, was this, that it would have been eaſy to accompany ſuch a Vote of Thanks with an intimation of the Committee's opinion, that the failure of the attempt was chiefly owing to the want of ſupport by the ſeveral Counties which had formerly eſpouſed the meaſure of Parliamentary Reformation; but which, on this occaſion, though preſſed to it by a previous declaration of the Miniſter's intention, did not co-operate with the Counties of York, Nottingham, &c. This would have tended to remove another objection injurious to Mr. Pitt, "that being the Miniſter, he might have carried the meaſure, if he would." And if the Public had been ſet right in this notion, it would have been a conſiderable advantage

to our cauſe, as well as to the reputation of Mr. Pitt.

Theſe ideas I did not expreſsly ſtate before, as, from Dr. Burgh's firſt Letter, I imagined your difficulties related chiefly, if not ſolely, to the impropriety of an Adjournment, *ſine die*, as objectionable on the principles of the Conſtitution of the Committee, and liable to cenſure, as a deſertion of our Truſt. But what I have now ſaid in explanation of the meaſure, *as it may affect the character of Mr. Pitt*, is not meant as a continuation of the argument; for finding you and Dr. Burgh, after my anſwer to his firſt Letter, are ſtill averſe to the propoſal, I have deſired Mr. Gray to return to me the intended Circular Letter, and I am glad that it is not inconſiſtent with my ideas of duty thus to mark my deference to your opinion and his.

It would have given me pleaſure to have ſeen you before you leave your reſidence; but I am juſt returned from Cleveland with ſo much rheumatiſm about me that I really am afraid to take a journey to York at preſent.

I am ever,
My dear Sir,
With great regard,
Moſt ſincerely your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper VII.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* William Burch, Eſq.

Burton-Hall, *Feb.* 4, 1786.

My dear Sir,

IN deference to your opinion and Mr. Maſon's, I have deſired Mr. Gray to return to me the intended Circular Letter; though I own my ſentiments are not materially altered. I think the meaſure propoſed would have been clearly conſiſtent with the conſtitution of the Committee, and that it would have been a more honourable mode of terminating the exertions of that body, than to ſink into a ſtate of dormancy, by the ſilent diſcontinuance of its meetings. As to the charge of deſerting our Truſt, to which you apprehend the propoſed Adjournment might have expoſed us, it would have been in fact ſo totally groundleſs, that I cannot conceive any other reply would have been neceſſary than that alone which will be equally wanted, and which will equally ſerve to juſtify the conduct of the Committee, for ceaſing to make ſome farther application to Parliament, viz. that, in the preſent temper of the nation, any application would not only be fruitleſs, but evidently hurtful to the cauſe. As to the danger of weakening the Aſſociation by an Adjournment of the Committee, I think that effect not likely to have been the conſequence of ſuch a meaſure. Time, without a ſingle

deſertion,

defertion, will inevitably weaken, and at laſt deſtroy that body. But if the Committee, previous to an Adjournment, had ſtrongly declared their reſolution to adhere to the principles of the Aſſociation, and to ſupport every attempt that may hereafter be made to reform Parliament, whenever a change in the public opinion affords reaſonable proſpect of ſucceſs, I ſuppoſe the bond of union would have been as well preſerved, as it will be, by the mere ſilence of the Committee. In either caſe, ſome degree of treachery may be expected to take place. But the main body of our friends, I doubt not, will act with fidelity to their engagements. Such, I own, are my ſentiments on this whole buſineſs, notwithſtanding the arguments which have been brought with ſo much ability to ſupport the negative ſide of the queſtion.

But I mention the remaining difference of opinion between us, only to conclude with aſſuring you, that, on this occaſion, I cheerfully give up my ſentiments to you and Mr. Maſon; and alſo think myſelf obliged to you for the ample conſideration you have given the ſubject.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

C. WYVILL.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from the* Rev. WILLIAM MASON *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

WADWORTH, *Feb.* 12, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I AM thus far in my way to Aſton, where I mean to be to-morrow. I have ſat down to tell you, that I am always very ſorry when any perſon accedes to my ſentiments without being previouſly convinced of their rectitude; and much more ſo, when that perſon is one to whoſe judgment I have been long uſed to ſubmit: But I muſt be free to tell you, that I have ſometimes thought, and the event has juſtified my opinion, that when you are convinced of the *theoretical* rectitude of a meaſure, you do not ſufficiently advert to what the *practical* obliquity of mankind may do to deſtroy its effect. To give only one proof of ſeveral which I could mention, you had convinced yourſelf laſt ſpring, that the Country Gentlemen *ought* to approve Mr. Pitt's plan; you therefore concluded that they *would*. You find you there reckoned without your hoſt; and I think muſt now be convinced, (from what Lord S. has ſince ſaid in the Houſe this Seſſion,) that betraying your meaſures to Charles Fox, he was the occaſion of bringing his myrmidons down upon you at the St. Alban's. If you ſtill think otherwiſe, and ſtill believe that noble Lord your friend,

and

and a friend to the Reform in good earneſt, I have only to beg you will add to your belief the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation which he has abjured. On this laſt occaſion, thinking, as you do, that Mr. Pitt *ought* to be thanked by our Committee for his exertions, you in like manner conclude that he *would*, were that Committee called: But in this, I humbly think, you judge with equal uncertainty as to the event; for that Committee, be aſſured, has Lord S.'s in its boſom. However this may be, you will find, by Burgh's Letter, and the ſteps we have taken towards paying our debts, that another Sub-Committee muſt be called in the ſecond week of the Aſſizes for ſettling that buſineſs; and you will find too how ready ſome of our members, who are not Seceders, will take the part of Seceders in that wretched buſineſs. I wiſh much you could be prevailed upon to attend that meeting, that you might ſee with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears, what men really are, when a guinea is in queſtion. But enough on this miſerable ſubject. I will only add my ſincereſt wiſhes for your better health, and my ſincereſt aſſurances of being,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt faithful friend,

W. MASON*.

* In the year 1786, the Yorkſhire Committee appears to have been diſpirited by the loſs of thoſe reſpectable Members who had ſeceded from that body in 1784; and ſtill more, by the feeble ſupport it had received in 1785 from the other Committees, and the conſequent defeat of Mr. Pitt's Motion for a Reform in the Repreſentation. They ſaw no near proſpect of ſucceſs; they were fatigued with fruitleſs exertions, and wiſhed for repoſe;

To

To diſpoſe them to cloſe their purſuit with becoming dignity, ſeemed all that remained to be effected.

With this view, the intended Circular Letter was ſent to the Clerk of the Committee to be printed, and communicated to the Members. But fearful of taking any ſtep which might be miſconſtrued, the Chairman wiſhed previouſly to conſult Mr. H. Duncombe, Mr. Maſon, and Mr. Burgh. Hence the Correſpondence, of which a part has been laid before the Reader; and hence the ultimate abandonment of the meaſure. From Mr. H. Duncombe an anſwer was received, too indeciſive to afford the leaſt encouragement to proceed. From Mr. Maſon and Mr. Burgh a joint letter was received, expreſſing ſtrongly their doubts of the propriety of the meaſure; and, in ſubſequent letters, thoſe doubts were improved by diſcuſſion into a direct and ſtrenuous oppoſition. In conſequence of the indeciſion of one friend, and the warmth with which the meaſure was oppoſed by the other friends conſulted, the Circular Letter was withdrawn from the Clerk, and never was tranſmitted to the Committee. As the hope of Reform became more and more diſtant and indiſtinct, the Members became leſs and leſs inclined to meet, till at laſt the proſpect of ſucceſs wholly vaniſhed, and the intention of meeting again was tacitly, but generally, given up. Thus the Yorkſhire Committee was ſuffered to die away, without a proper cloſe being put either to its exiſtence by a Diſſolution at a County Meeting, or to its capacity to act by the Committee itſelf, adjourning *ſine die*.

But the blame of this undignified cloſe of the Committee ſhould be imputed chiefly to the Chairman, whoſe want of due reſolution and vigour on this occaſion, it muſt be owned, deſerves reprobation. For it is not ſufficient to exculpate him to alledge, what he may truly plead, that he committed this fault, partly from deference to the friends whom he conſulted, partly from anxiety to preſerve that harmony in the Committee, without which it could not retain a hope to ſerve the Cauſe of Reformation in any future emergency. It is true, indeed, that after the opinion of his friends had been found either indeciſive, or adverſe, the ſuppreſſion of the Circular Letter became unavoidable. But it ought to have been foreſeen by the Chairman, that his application might produce this inconvenient reſult, and conſequently the Letter in queſtion ought to have been ſent forth without any previous conſultation. In that caſe, if his ſuggeſtion had been diſregarded, as a needleſs attention to form, it could have given no offence; leaſt, it could have produced no ſerious diſſention in the Committee, and the Chairman would have felt, with ſatisfaction, that he had performed the duty which his official ſtation required. Or if, on the other hand, his ſuggeſtion had been approved, a Meeting of the Committee would have been called, and this popular Deputation would have been cloſed with that becoming regularity, and dignified attention to propriety, which had hitherto marked its conduct. That the Yorkſhire Committee is not entitled

titled to the commendation of having closed its labours with propriety, that its proceedings therefore do not afford an unexceptionable precedent to future Deputations of the Counties, &c. must be acknowledged. But the blame is principally to be imputed to the Chairman, whose peculiar duty it was to preserve order and propriety in all their conduct. He now feels, with regret, the fault he committed; and he thus makes the only possible reparation, by confessing it. He trusts, that they who may hereafter engage in the necessary task of Reformation, by a similar interposition of the People, will be warned to adhere invariably to the strictest rules of order and propriety, which alone can give to Deputed Bodies the confidence of their Constituents, or any just hope of serving the Public.

NUMBER

NUMBER XLI.

Paper I.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

CRANWORTH, *Oct.* 14, 1780.

Dear Wyvill,

CONFIDING in that candour which is ever an attendant upon genuine Patriotism, I venture to hint a few ideas, which, if founded in reason, have most probably occurred to yourself. The present Parliament will, in all probability, on the first day of its meeting, give us a foretaste of what we are to expect for the ensuing seven years, or, in other words, it will be as venal as the last.

It is probable, that upon its first meeting it will be affecting to guard against future Riots, strike deep at some constitutional privileges which we have been hitherto taught to revere as essential to our Liberties. It is probable, also, that it will afford a sanction to the countenance of the American War, and instantly endeavour to involve us in such a manner in

that

that iniquitous buſineſs, that no future exertions will enable us to extricate ourſelves from diſhonour and diſtreſs.

It may alſo endeavour to involve us in an unhappy difference with our Siſter Kingdom.

It may, laſtly, make an effort to render the only meaſure which can ſave us, viz. the Reſtoration of its own Freedom and Independency, odious to the Body of the Nation by ſome vile ſophiſtry, of which we had ſo many examples of late years. In theſe circumſtances, would it not be uſeful early to aſſemble the Committees, if not the Counties, to appoint a Delegation in ſome proportion to the numbers of People, ſo that they may vote as Individuals, and paſs ſome Reſolves, particularly reſpecting the above points, to ſhew that at the time we are contending for our own Liberties, we honour and applaud the effort which Ireland is making to ſecure an Independent Legiſlature of King, Lords, and Commoners, a cauſe ſimilar in many reſpects to our own; to declare that we wiſh to ſee Right and Truth to prevail in every Nation under Heaven, conſiding that we then may look to Providence for aſſiſtance, when we plead not only our own cauſe, but the cauſe of human kind. I have reaſon to believe that ſuch generoſity with reſpect to Ireland would greatly promote the eſtabliſhment of that Independency of Parliament which I have the pleaſure to reflect is a point in which we are cordially agreed.

All

All England looks up to Yorkſhire at this moment: may its movements be attended with that ſucceſs which the integrity and ſpirit of its Leaders encourage us to expect.

Ever with great eſteem,
affectionately your's,
JOHN JEBB.

Rev. C. Wyvill.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Dr. JOHN JEBB.

BURTON-HALL, *Nov.* 18*th*, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I OUGHT to have made an earlier acknowledgment of your favour of the 14th of October; but, to ſay the honeſt truth, I was not, nor am I yet prepared to give any decided opinion on the important matter you propoſe; but I now prefer giving you that unſatisfactory anſwer to the riſque of appearing inattentive by a longer ſilence.

They who ſee their way before them on that ground which you point to, are in the right to ſtep forward, but I confeſs I am not of that number; therefore, although no one more ſincerely wiſhes the enjoyment of Liberty to all mankind than I do, yet for the

preſent I muſt forbear taking any public part in the way you hint at. We have engaged in a moſt arduous undertaking; to ſucceed in it will require the moſt zealous perſeverance, the utmoſt caution and prudence, and as perfect unanimity in the great eſſentials of our plan as we can poſſibly preſerve. I therefore muſt declare, for one, that I wiſh to avoid engaging with any new matter, until I can plainly ſee ſufficient probability that good rather than evil may be expected to reſult from it; and I am by no means clear that the time is yet arrived when the ſubject in queſtion might be introduced properly and with advantage either to England or Ireland.

With reſpect to the Reſolutions which this Committee is likely to come to on the 3d of January, I cannot ſpeak with certainty; but I believe it may be relied on that Yorkſhire will ſend Deputies to meet in London or Weſtminſter. It is too laborious a work to go round this extenſive County for ſignatures to another Petition; and of the other two obvious meaſures, that of petitioning by ſeparate Committees, or that by a General Deputation from them all, the laſt method of proceeding is equally feaſible as the other, vaſtly more powerful, and not more liable to objection from the novelty or ſuppoſed irregularity of the Aſſembly. On theſe accounts I think it almoſt certain Deputies will be nominated at the next Meeting, with Inſtructions to ſupport the Petition and the Parliamentary Reform.

The

The favourable opinion you expreſs of the ſpirit and integrity of the Yorkſhire Committee, I am perſuaded you will not have reaſon to change. They are firm and unſhaken in the Public Cauſe, and they will certainly act a uniform and conſiſtent part. If they needed any farther inducement than the ſenſe of Duty to their Country, they would find it in the eſteem and approbation of Men like you. Believe me ever,

Dear Sir,

Moſt truly your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Wyvill,

I THANK you for your laſt favour, and attention to the ſubjects in my laſt. When every thing is heard and calmly diſcuſſed, unanimity is not ſo difficult a matter, eſpecially when the Public Good is ſincerely intended.

You will obſerve that our Committee have adopted moſt of your Reſolutions, and have added a ſtroke at the pernicious doctrine held on the firſt day of the Parliament's meeting, viz. that it was owing to the ſingular moderation

deration of the K—— that we were not enſlaved.

Our Society for Conſtitutional Information flouriſhes exceedingly. I ſend you our Laws reviſed: The firſt of them explains our meaning.—I ſend you alſo a Liſt of our Weſtminſter Committee, printed in order to aſſiſt in the Ballot for Deputies upon the nineteenth of next month.

The great puſh of the Minority will be made, it is thought, in February; if it fails, they will probably think with the Aſſociations, that the ſhortening of Parliaments, and equalizing of the Repreſentation, will be neceſſary to preſerve Freedom, and will therefore more cordially unite with them. Lord Fitzwilliam puſhed the Reſolution of the ſubſequent Meeting of your Committee * reſpecting Mr. Burke's Bill, which I honeſtly tell you does not ſuit my idea. Moving the People of England to carry ſo ſmall a Reform, would be tempeſting the ocean to drown a fly.—I know not whether you and I think alike on that ſubject; but I tell you what paſſes in my mind, thinking it always right to do ſo; for when we tell each other where we differ, there will be more confidence in each other with reſpect to the points wherein we agree.

* The Reſolution alluded to paſſed at a Meeting of the Yorkſhire Committee on the 3d of Auguſt, 1780. It directed the Chairman to write to Mr. Burke, to deſire him to preſent again, in the next Seſſion of Parliament, his Bill for the better regulation of his Majeſty's Civil Eſtabliſhments.

With

With Mrs. Jebb's compliments, and every good wiſh, I am

Affectionately your's,

JOHN JEBB.

CRAVEN-STREET, 19th Dec. 1780.

P. S. Mr. Trumbull will ſoon be releaſed; not ſo Laurens.

Paper IV.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Wyvill,

I THANK you for the account of the Proceedings of the Committee, and honour the Gentlemen who compoſe it, for their perſeverance at a moment when ſo many, I muſt own I think without reaſon, deſpond.

You ſeem to think it difficult to determine what ſteps are next to be taken. I am ſorry there is any doubt upon the ſubject. You ſay the future conduct of the Committee will much depend on circumſtances, and particularly on the appearance of a better and more general ſupport next winter; but why mention winter on this occaſion? Is it becauſe Parliament meets in the winter? Are our hopes of Reformation then ſtill to depend upon Parliament; upon that Parliament which it ought to be the purpoſe of every Friend to his Country to reform? a Parliament which

can only be reformed by a recurrence to the Principles of the Conſtitution, and the ſtrenuous exertions of the collective Body of the People? Strange, as an able man well obſerves, that it ſhall be allowed to the Repreſentative to make every innovation in the Conſtitution that ſelfiſhneſs and treaſon can ſuggeſt, at the ſame time that we heſitate whether the Conſtituent has a right to reform what the villainy of the Servant hath deranged. For my own part, I am ſatisfied that the People, in their Aſſemblies, may conſtitutionally appoint Committees, with full power to correct the abuſes of Repreſentation, and are under no obligation to treat with any other parties than the Nobility and the King. Upon every plan of application to our Repreſentatives for ſuch a purpoſe, I am perſuaded that diſappointment and ſcorn will always be the reſult.

You ſay you do not expect any thing can be done unleſs the meaſures adopted by the ſeveral Counties, and approved by the laſt General Deputation, be conſidered by the Friends to Mr. Cartwright's Plan as deſerving of their ſupport. I muſt cordially confeſs, that for one I would never have ſubjected myſelf to the loſſes, odium, and anxiety I have ſuſtained, if I could have imagined that the Friends of Reformation could have been ſatisfied with ſo defective a Plan. You ſee the advantage Mr. Edmund Burke has made of it in his Letter to the People of Buckinghamſhire: "You will be called upon (ſays he) to declare

that

that the House of Commons is not sufficiently numerous." This objection would not have had any place, had a proposition for cutting off an hundred Members been early adopted. But this, it may be said, is a measure to which the Proprietors will not accede. Are we certain that they will, *bona fide*, agree to the measure of the hundred Knights? will they not object the confusion which the election of them will occasion in the larger Counties, without some better arrangements than at present subsist? Lord Mahon has not convinced me that we shall be able to purchase even their acquiescence by any declarations we can make, and surely upon the principle of selfishness it would be unwise in them to make any concession whatsoever. The addition of an hundred Knights would of itself diminish the influence of the Borough Holders more than I am sure they will ever approve, not to mention the reasonable alarm which would agitate the minds of the Aristocracy, lest these hundred Knights should in a little time, notwithstanding many solemn promises to the contrary, utterly despoil them of what they very improperly esteem their patrimony.

You say that we have no chance of success unless the People can detach a certain class from co-operating with Government in support of the present abuses. I answer, that we can never expect to detach them from a connection so injurious to their Country, unless we can make it appear to be their interest to

unite with us. In a general conſtitutional ſenſe it is certainly their intereſt to ſupport the Independency of the Commons Houſe of Parliament; but it is impoſſible that we can ever render it the intereſt of individuals to reſign that undue weight in the Legiſlature which many of them at preſent enjoy to the great injury of the Nation. We may talk of purchaſe voluntary and involuntary, as we pleaſe, but Legiſlative Power is ineſtimable in the opinion of the Poſſeſſor. The Party alluded to will never conſent to accept of what we would call a reaſonable compenſation for the Borough Intereſt, until compelled thereto by the Power of the People.

You ſeem to think that the extinction of the Committees will take place, unleſs all the Friends of Parliamentary Reformation unite on the ground already occupied by ſo conſiderable a part of the Nation. I muſt here beg leave to enter my proteſt againſt this repreſentation of the caſe. With reſpect to the point of fact, the meaſure of the hundred Knights was the ſuggeſtion of a few individuals, and the manner in which it made its way into the delegation, and from thence into ſome of the Committees, was not ſuch as gave reaſon to imagine it would meet with vigorous and permanent ſupport. Yet, I muſt own, though with ſome degree of ſelf-condemnation, that I have more than once ſupported it; but, at the time I did ſo, I hoped the meaſure would be followed by others of more conſequence, and could not ſuſpect it was in contemplation

temptation to ſuſpend our exertions, even in ſupport of this imperfect ſcheme, until the fantaſtic idea, Oeconomical Reformation, was realized by the event. In my opinion the ſpirit of accommodation will ruin all, nor can any good purpoſe be anſwered by conceding to meaſures which the judgment diſapproves. Equal Repreſentation, Seſſional Parliaments, and the Univerſal Right of Suffrage, are points alone worthy of an Engliſhman's regard; no difficulties, no dangers, no ſufferings, will induce me to decline bearing a part in any Conſtitutional exertion for their attainment. I look upon them as attainable, though probably not ſo ſpeedily as we could wiſh; but I am confident, in my opinion, that the whole may be more eaſily obtained than a part; the Conſtitution of the Commons Houſe of Parliament can never be reſtored gradatim, nor under God, by any other power than that to which it owes its exiſtence, I mean the Power of the People, whoſe proper weight and authority in the ſcale of Government is now riſing in every part of Europe, and I truſt will not much longer be depreſſed in this Country, either by the Luſt of Power in the Monarch, or Ariſtocratic Jealouſy in the Peer.

The Plan of Parliamentary Reformation which I laid before Sir George Savile in 1776, and before the Freeholders of Middleſex in the cloſe of 1779, I have thought it my duty to keep uniformly in view; although, through a deſire of promoting uniformity, not very handſomely requited, I have aſſented to partial meaſures,

meaſures, and have been content to uſe the language of ſervility to a Tribunal which at the moment I eſteemed corrupt.

I muſt alſo beg leave to obſerve, that the friends of Major Cartwright's ſyſtem have been indefatigable in their endeavours to keep up the ſpirits of the Friends of Liberty in every part of the kingdom, although they ſaw meaſures embraced in preference to theſe which they verily believed would have awakened the ſlumbering virtue of the People. That they have too great a regard for the ſacred cauſe they are engaged in, to ſuſpend their efforts on account of a difference of opinion; nor is it probable that even the event you dread, viz. the breaking up of the Aſſociations, which they have uniformly endeavoured to preſerve in being, would induce them finally to deſpond. Having ſaid thus much reſpecting what is paſt, permit me to offer a few words reſpecting future proceedings.

The cauſe we are engaged in, is a cauſe which Honour and true Patriotiſm will not ſuffer any man to relinquiſh who has embraced it upon a proper principle; and therefore I am confident the Gentlemen of Yorkſhire will ſteadily perſevere; a ſimilar perſeverance of the Virtuous may be expected in every part of England. Of this they may reſt perſuaded, that if they purſue, with a proper degree of vigour, theſe meaſures, which are founded in juſtice, are ſtrictly conſtitutional, and of which the utility is evident

to

to ordinary apprehenſions, they will meet with the full concurrence of the People, and that concurrence will enable them to effect their purpoſe. Conſcious of ſuch principles as will abide the trial, I repoſe my confidence in the protection of Heaven; I therefore will not, indeed I cannot deſpond.

With reſpect to difference of ſentiments, it muſt be expected for a time: let us not obſtruct a free diſcuſſion of the ſubject, rather let us ſedulouſly promote it. Let us reflect, that true unanimity flouriſhes only where free diſcuſſion hath previouſly prevailed; and that as the Commons Houſe of Parliament cannot be ſaid to be in reality reſtored to freedom and independency, unleſs it ſpeaks the ſentiments of the Engliſh People, every Engliſhman has a right to be conſulted in its formation.

I have now ſpoken my ſentiments with a freedom for which I ſhall make no apology, becauſe the ſubject requires ſincerity of intention, and the utmoſt plainneſs of ſpeech. I will only add, that I ſhall be happy in hearing from you, and that, with the moſt cordial reſpect and eſteem,

I am affectionately your's,

JOHN JEBB *.

CRAVEN-STREET, *Aug.* 7, 1781.

P. S. I ſhould be glad of a line, informing me this Letter has got ſafe to your hands.

* The Letter by the Editor has not been found, to which Dr. Jebb returned this anſwer.

Paper V.

Paper V.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Dr. JOHN JEBB.

HARTLEPOOL, *Aug.* 27, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I Received the favour of your Letter of the 7th of this month, and had no reaſon to think it had been opened at the Poſt-office.

When I expreſſed an apprehenſion that there was a tendency to a diſſolution of ſome of the Aſſociated Bodies, I did not allude to that of Yorkſhire. It is but juſtice to aſſure you that the Yorkſhire Gentlemen adhere with unſhaken firmneſs to the cauſe of Parliamentary Reformation. But I fear ſome other Aſſociations are not ſo much to be relied on: ſome late occurrences ſeem to indicate they have not that earneſt attachment to the Cauſe which we could wiſh. And the ſeparation of the moſt powerful part of the Nobility, and the want of unanimity among the Agents of the People, are not likely to promote that zealous perſeverance, without which no good can be done. On this account, I wiſh moſt anxiouſly that thoſe Gentlemen who think the Counties have not gone far enough in their propoſal of Reformation, may ſee reaſon to change their opinion, and inſtead of preſſing for what probably cannot be obtained, may reſolve to ſupport a Plan, which, attempting leſs, is much more likely to ſucceed; and

what

what ſeems to be an advantage not attending the more extenſive ſcheme, is likely to be obtained by a legal and peaceful oppoſition, without the hazards of a Civil War; and on this account I wiſh ſucceſs to any reaſonable ſcheme which can be propoſed for conciliating the Nobles and the Aſſociations, *by honeſt and conſiſtent means*. Without a Reform of Parliament, however ſucceſsfully the Crown might be oppoſed, the People would be duped, and no material benefit would be obtained for the Public. But without General Union, no attempt to reform Parliament can be ſucceſsful; and therefore a Plan of Reformation, in which the numbers requiſite to effect it are never likely to unite, ought not, in prudence, to be puſhed againſt one of leſs extent, but much more likely to ſucceed.

Theſe are the views which, from the beginning of the Popular Oppoſition, have governed my conduct; and I am not ſenſible of any thing wrong in this mode of reaſoning. If a perſon of your excellent ſenſe and perfect purity of intention ſhould determine to take a different line, I am clear this muſt ariſe from your ſeeing the ſubject in a light in which it does not appear to me; and therefore I am aware the arguments which are to me convincing may make no impreſſion on your mind, as thoſe which decide your judgment may have little effect on mine. In this caſe, I doubt not the intentions on both ſides may be equally honeſt; but the difference of conduct being unavoidable, it were to no

purpoſe

purpoſe to preſs any farther conſideration of the ſubject.

I beg my compliments to Mrs. Jebb, and am,

Dear Sir,

With very ſincere eſteem and regard,

Your moſt faithful ſervant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper VI.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Wyvill,

I RECEIVED with pleaſure your candid and friendly Letter. I ſee we may differ, and yet preſerve the utmoſt mutual regard. Mine for you is moſt aſſuredly unabated, becauſe it is founded upon the full conviction that you are in earneſt with reſpect to the Great Cauſe.

I am happy in thinking that Cauſe is again likely to get forward.

I have reaſon to believe there will ſoon be propoſed, in various parts, a ſtrong remonſtrance againſt the continuance of the American War. I hope it will be taken up with more than ordinary ſpirit; and the injuſtice and impolicy of it, conſidered with reſpect to its effect on Engliſh Liberty, were it to be ſucceſsful, will probably not paſs unnoticed.

All

All our Friends will unite on this ground; and I hope you will ſoon ſee ſome exertions in the Metropolis which will give pleaſure to all the true Friends of Freedom.

You ſee by the Courant of this day in what light the Friends of Liberty in London look upon the queſtion of ſhortened Parliaments. They place it in the front rank of Reformation-meaſures. I am ſatisfied that Lord Mahon will not ſucceed in his idea of compromiſing with the Minority; yet they will be ours; ours from a ſelfiſh view, if we are ſteady to our own Cauſe. Let us hold faſt the Truth, and the Truth will make us free.

I look forward with pleaſure to the operations of the next winter.—With Mrs. Jebb's reſpects, and every good wiſh, I am

Sincerely and affectionately your's,

JOHN JEBB.

CRAVEN-STREET, *27th Sept.* 1781.

P. S. America, I truſt, will flouriſh as ſoon as Independence is eſtabliſhed. I hope and believe that day is not now far diſtant. What a great event will this be in the Civil and Religious Hiſtory of Mankind! Its probable effect on both the Religion and Civil Happineſs of Mankind has not yet been fully conſidered. The Goſpel will triumph in conſequence of the true ſpirit of Toleration being eſtabliſhed in the Tranſatlantic World.

Paper VII.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Wyvill,

I RECEIVED your ſecond obliging favour, with the incloſed Addreſs, this evening; I had received alſo your former one, and had ſent you a printed Copy of my Letter to Sir Robert Bernard, which I truſt by this time you have received. I will tell you my opinion frankly. So far as the ſecond Addreſs goes, with reſpect to the argument for Parliamentary Reformation, I like it greatly. I am not againſt what is ſaid for the partial Reform. I think it is executed in a maſterly manner, and I wiſh to ſee the whole argument diſcuſſed, and therefore will promote its diſperſion; but you ſee that I cannot do this, without at the ſame time hinting ſome obſervations on what I ſee is againſt the plan I favour. Were I to do otherwiſe, I ſhould certainly act diſingenuouſly. We certainly go together a great way, but ſome wiſh to go further. The only thing I ever diſliked was, the throwing a damp upon thoſe who would go further; thus giving an handle to the common adverſary to attack us as wild Enthuſiaſts, &c. Whereas, in order to get what you propoſe, it would have been more advantageous to have let us proceeded our own way, without maſking our ſcheme as impracticable; the objection

objection the adverſary has to all ſchemes. But enough on this—only that if you ſend me 25 Copies of the Addreſs, I will get them down to Huntingdonſhire, and circulate them there as much as I have done my own.

I will now ſay a little on what paſſed to-night. Lord Shelburne ſpoke admirably for deferring the Addreſs till the Grand Council of the Nation has conſidered what was proper to be done.—Lord Derby wiſhed ſome bold man would ſnatch the bandage from the eyes of Majeſty.—Duke of Grafton, in plain terms, called him the deluded K——.—Duke of R——nd, that we muſt put arms into the hands of the People, as we had no Army for our defence.—Marquis of Rockingham, that the People would take their affairs into their own hands.—This told haſtily by a Friend come from the Houſe. But the great point is, that if to-morrow's light does not ſhow things very different from what we expect, the whole Metropolis will be in motion for a ſtrong remonſtrance to the Throne. In this ſome very diſtinguiſhed Characters will take the lead; and it is imagined that there will be a greater ſpirit and unanimity than this City has ever yet ſeen.

I dare not mention the things that are ſaid of Pharoah or Rehoboam upon this occaſion. His ſpeech, which was foreſeen this morning, has cauſed an impreſſion by no means to his advantage. None of the Cabinet avow it. It has dropped from the clouds; at leaſt this was this morning's ſentiments.

I draw a favourable augury from theſe things. The People will be once more alive, and Committees will receive the benefit in due time. I know you are not againſt more being done, could you ſee it practicable. I truſt you will ſoon ſee it is practicable. Family prejudices, ſuch as thoſe of Devonſhire, &c. do miſchief. Let us explore the right way, and purſue it ſteadily, and all will do well.

I have the greateſt confidence in your ſpirit, and the ſpirit of your Compatriots in Yorkſhire, though we differ in the means.

The Poſt is going by: I therefore conclude myſelf

Affectionately your's,

JOHN JEBB.

CRAVEN-STREET, *Nov.* 27, 1781.

Paper VIII.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Wyvill,

I THANK you for the parcels, which I will diſpoſe of as directed. I thank you for your friendly Letter. You ſee what is going on under the auſpices of the Quintuple Alliance, who all will adopt the ſame form. Hertfordſhire, it is ſaid, is about the ſame buſineſs, and Eſſex. You ſee by the incloſed the ſimplicity of the plan. ——— will perſiſt, and will draw the Majority

Majority of both Houſes to combine with him.—To-morrow an important queſtion is moved: if they fail, they will probably come down to the People, and will aſſiſt our great queſtion of Parliamentary Reformation, without which nothing can be effected. Some attempts were made to get the *Influence* of the Crown into the Petition: our ſteady men put a ſtop to it. I am more and more ſatisfied that Parliament muſt be reformed *per ſaltum*. The London People are much in earneſt, and the Friends to Parliamentary Reform increaſe in Weſtminſter. Without a ſingle exception they are for addreſſing againſt the American War. Other meaſures are ſcheming, if remonſtrance fails; all purſuing the line of peaceable oppoſition, and all tending to inform the People in their Rights.

I perceive to-night that the Weſtminſter Petition is printed in the Engliſh Chronicle very exactly. Great pains were taken in its conſtruction. That expreſſion of yours to Mr. Hollis makes me think you ſuppoſe we are loſing ſight of the great object; quite the reverſe. You will find it puſhed with more vigour, and, I truſt, with effect, by the Friends of Liberty in the Metropolis, who ſee the weakneſs of Parliament, and will aſſuredly claim their ſhare, whenever a Reformation of it in any degree is demanded.

Your's affectionately,

JOHN JEBB.

Craven-Street, *Dec.* 11, 1781.

P. S. I wanted to go directly to the point of American Independence.

Paper IX.

The Humble Addreſs, Petition, *and* Remonſtrance *of the* Electors *and* Inhabitants *paying* Taxes *to* Government, *reſident in the* City *and* Liberty *of* Weſtminſter.

IMPRESSED with an awful ſenſe of the dangers which ſurround us, feeling for ourſelves and our poſterity, anxious for the glory of a Country, hitherto as much renowned for the virtues of juſtice and humanity as for the ſplendour of its arms, we approach your Throne with ſentiments becoming Citizens at ſo alarming an hour, and at the ſame time with that reſpect which is due to the Monarch of a free People, and a Prince of the illuſtrious Houſe of Brunſwick, to which we feel ourſelves in a peculiar manner attached by all the ties of gratitude and affection.

It is with inexpreſſible concern that we have heard your Majeſty declare, in your Speech to both Houſes of Parliament, your intention of perſevering in a ſyſtem of meaſures which has proved ſo diſaſtrous to this Country.

Such a declaration calls for the voice of a free and injured People; we feel the reſpect due to majeſty; but, in this critical and awful moment, to flatter is to betray.

Your Majeſty's Miniſters have, by falſe aſſertions and fallacious ſuggeſtions, deluded your Majeſty and the Nation into the preſent unnatural and unfortunate War.

The

The conſequences of this deluſion have been, that the Trade of this Country has ſuffered irreparable loſſes, and is threatened with final extinction.

The Manufactures in many valuable branches are declining, and their ſupply of materials rendered precarious, by the inferiority of your Majeſty's fleet to that of the Enemy, in almoſt every part of the globe.

The landed property throughout the kingdom has been depreciated to the moſt alarming degree.

The property of your Majeſty's ſubjects, veſted in the Public Funds, has loſt above one-third of its value.

Private Credit has been almoſt wholly annihilated by the enormous intereſt given in the Public Loans, ſuperior to that which is allowed by law in any private contract.

Such of our Brethren in America, as were deluded by the promiſes of your Majeſty's Miniſters, and the Proclamations of your Generals, have been ſurrendered by your Majeſty's Armies to the mercy of their Enemies.

Your Majeſty's Fleets have loſt their wonted ſuperiority.

Your Armies have been captured.

Your Dominions have been loſt.

And your Majeſty's faithful ſubjects have been loaded with a burthen of Taxes, which, even if our victories had been as ſplendid as our defeats have been diſgraceful; if our acceſſion of dominion had been as fortunate as

the diſmemberment of the Empire has been cruel and diſaſtrous, could not in itſelf be conſidered but as a great and grievous calamity.

We do, therefore, moſt humbly implore your Majeſty to take all theſe circumſtances into your Royal conſideration, and to compare the preſent ſituation of your dominions with that uncommon ſtate of proſperity to which the wiſdom of your Royal Anceſtors, the ſpirit and bravery of the Britiſh People, and the favour of Divine Providence, which naturally attends upon principles of juſtice and humanity, had once raiſed this happy Country, the pride and envy of all the civilized world.

We do beſeech your Majeſty no longer to continue in a deluſion from which the Nation has awakened, and that your Majeſty will be graciouſly pleaſed to relinquiſh *entirely* and for *ever* the plan of reducing our Brethren in America to obedience by force, a plan which the fatal experience of paſt loſſes has convinced us cannot be proſecuted without manifeſt and imminent danger to all your Majeſty's remaining poſſeſſions in the Weſtern World.

We wiſh to declare to your Majeſty, to Europe, to America itſelf, our abhorrence of the continuation of this unnatural and unfortunate War, which can tend to no other purpoſe than that of alienating and rendering irrecoverable the confidence of our American Brethren, with whom we ſtill hope to live

upon

upon the terms of intercourſe and friendſhip, ſo neceſſary to the commercial proſperity of this Country.

We do, therefore, further humbly implore your Majeſty, that your Majeſty will be graciouſly pleaſed to diſmiſs from your preſence and councils all the adviſers, both public and ſecret, of the meaſures we lament, as a pledge to the world of your Majeſty's fixed determination to abandon a ſyſtem incompatible with the Intereſts of your Crown, and the Happineſs of your People.

Paper X.

Letter *from* Dr. JOHN JEBB *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Wyvill,

I AM much obliged by the information you communicated to me, reſpecting Lord Shelburne's Meſſage, which I have thought of every day ſince your Letter * arrived, without being able to come to any concluſion reſpecting his intention, or the probable event. Never were ſpirit and firmneſs ſo much required as at preſent. I hope and believe the Yorkſhire Committee will ſet an example of both; and I truſt they will harmonize in opinion with the Reſolutions of the Thatched

* The Letter here alluded to may be found in the 3d Volume of Political Papers, at the 346th Page.

Tavern, a meaſure which I conceive is neceſſary to produce that general concurrence ſo eſſential to ſucceſs.—The buſineſs of ſhip-building, I am afraid, was brought forward for the purpoſe of quaſhing our affair. It was particularly deſired that no other buſineſs might be done at the Meetings held upon the late calls of the Sheriffs. When I ſee, I ſhall believe; but at preſent I cannot believe the Miniſters to be in earneſt. The argument I would deduce is, that the People ſhould continue their exertions, and not be lulled into ſecurity by the promiſes of men in power. It is the People's buſineſs; ought to be puſhed with ſteadineſs; and therefore I am the more ſolicitous that Yorkſhire may ſet an example in which all the Counties can concur.

With every good wiſh reſpecting the Cauſe you have ſo much at heart, and which is really that Cauſe which includes in it every thing that is valuable to Engliſhmen,

I remain,
affectionately your's,
JOHN JEBB.

CRAVEN-STREET, *Oct.* 25, 1782.

* From the correſpondence in this Number, and from ſome other Letters in this Volume, the Reader will perceive that a want of harmony and cordial co-operation manifeſted itſelf, at an early period of the Aſſociations, and frequently crippled their efforts. The two Meetings of Deputies, and after them the two Meetings at the Thatched Houſe Tavern, were held with a deſign to ſecure Unanimity in the popular Proceedings, but they failed to produce the intended effect. In the diſſentions alluded to, there was more to lament than to blame. But the blame, if any muſt be awarded, may be juſtly divided between the Yorkſhire Committee and thoſe in the Metropolis, and perhaps in proportions nearly equal. On its formation in 1779, the Yorkſhire Committee was jealous of its

its independence, fearful of the influence of ſome great Nobles oppoſed to the Crown, and anxious that their public ſpirited exertions ſhould not be ſubſervient merely to the purpoſes of a ſelfiſh ambition, and the manœuvres of men, contending, as the Committee ſuſpected, rather for Power, than for the correction of great Political Abuſes.

But it may now be owned without offence, the Editor hopes, that theſe anxious fears and jealouſies, however natural, and even laudable at firſt, were puſhed too far, and in the courſe of the ſtruggle for Reform, were productive of meaſures injurious to the Common Cauſe; and particularly, that to the conduct dictated by thoſe fears and jealouſies, the riſe of the diſſentions in the Reforming Bodies in part may be aſcribed.

On the other hand, it may be juſtly thought, perhaps, that the Committees of the Metropolis were too ſanguine in their hope of a very extenſive and complete Reform, and too unwilling to unite cordially in promoting thoſe imperfect, yet ſtill beneficial Reforms, which were propoſed by Yorkſhire, but which the influence of Yorkſhire never could induce the majority of the Counties to adopt. That the propoſal of more extenſive improvements would but have increaſed the diffidence of thoſe Counties ſeemed evident; yet the popular Agents in London ſtill protracted diſcuſſion, ſtill preſſed Yorkſhire to advance to more extended changes; not perceiving that theſe diſſentions weakened Yorkſhire, without adding to their ſtrength.

Between the Editor, and the worthy Dr. John Jebb, though they were engaged in the ſame Cauſe of Conſtitutional Reform, the correſpondence was too frequently controverſial; and the meaſures propoſed or approved by one of thoſe Friends were often diſapproved, ſometimes ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by the other. But their perſonal regard remained unimpaired, and their political connection unbroken: ſuch was the incomparable ſuavity of temper in Dr. Jebb, and ſo high was his Friend's eſteem of his integrity. He was a man of great abilities, of extenſive learning; eloquent in his writings and in debate; amiable for his candour and benevolence; exemplary for his piety, and the ſtrict morality of his private life; and in his public conduct he maintained Truth with the intrepidity of a Martyr; and purſued General Good with the ardour of an Enthuſiaſt!

The Editor has thus endeavoured to do juſtice to the character of his Friend, while he marked the difference of political ſentiment which frequently ſubſiſted between Dr. Jebb and himſelf. In juſtice to his own character, he may be allowed to explain particularly, that he has always diſapproved Dr. Jebb's idea * of a Deputation appointed by the People to treat with the King and Nobles for a Reform of Parliament, without applying to the Houſe of Commons. It has always appeared to him to be a pro-

* See Paper IV. of this Number.

poſition

position totally incompatible with any plan of moderate Reform, and pregnant with hazards to which his too-speculative Friend had not sufficiently adverted. He is not without hope, even in these times, that no extra-constitutional mode of reforming Parliament will ever need to be resorted to. It is still possible, that a due correction of Abuses may be obtained through the usual channel of the Legislature; and that it may be so obtained, is, and will be, his fervent prayer.

NUMBER

NUMBER XLII.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Earl *of* BUCHAN *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 2, 1782.

Rev. Sir,

THE Committee of the Association of the County of York has done me great honour, and you, Sir, have given me very great pleasure by the transmission of the Circular Letter relating to Parliamentary Reformation, which I received only a few days ago.

As I perceive, by the public advertisement of the Committee, that another General Meeting is announced for the 19th current, I think it necessary to lose no time to assure the Committee that my most strenuous efforts shall not be wanting in Scotland, to meet the virtuous wishes of the Constitutional Friends of Liberty.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that the people of Scotland are now awaking from the lethargy of a century, and that I am persuaded they will evince, if it is necessary, that they

are

are intitled to uſe the motto of the ancient Order of the Thiſtle.

Deſcended, as I am, from the families of Plantagenet, Tudor, and Stuart, as nearly as any ſubject in Britain, I feel a greater pride and excitement in my deſcent from that of Fairfax, of which I have the honour to be one of the Repreſentatives. But my greateſt pride and glory is my uniform attachment to the Cauſe of Liberty, which, in the midſt of deſertion, I have never forſaken.

I am one of thoſe wretched anomalous beings called Peers of Scotland, and can do nothing in a Senate where the People have few friends; but I can make my voice be heard in this Country, and I hope not in vain.

I have ſworn never to deſert a Cauſe for which many of my anceſtors have bled, and I will follow it, if it is neceſſary, as they did.

As ſoon as I can collect the printed proceedings of our Scotch Committees, relating to Conſtitutional Reform, and can at the ſame time report the progreſs in the Counties, they ſhall be tranſmitted to the Committee.

I am, Rev. Sir,

With ſincere reſpect and eſteem,

Your faithful ſervant,

BUCHAN.

P. S. In the ſtate of the buſineſs relating to Parliamentary Reform in Scotland, I did not apprehend that the Committee of the Delegates, from the Counties of the Kingdom, would

would enter into the cordial conſideration of the excellent Letter of the 22d, which I have acknowledged, but ſhall not fail to take the firſt opportunity of laying it before them.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Earl *of* BUCHAN *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 12, 1782.

Rev. Sir,

I HAVE tranſmitted to you, as the worthy Chairman of the Committee of Aſſociation of the County of York, the draught of two bills to be circulated in the Counties of Scotland, for the purpoſe of receiving an option or general approbation of thoſe concerned, ſo that a Petition may be preſented to the Houſe of Commons for the purpoſed Bill or Bills of Reformation, which I beg you'll lay before the Committee.

I deſire you will take the trouble to preſent my moſt reſpectful compliments to the truly reſpectable Committee where you preſide, and to inform them that I have regularly attended the Meetings of our Scottiſh Delegates, and, though a Peer, I have been permitted to conſider myſelf, and to be conſidered, as a Scottiſh Freeholder, deſirous of promoting the Conſtitutional Reformation in queſtion,

queſtion, and to give my advice and aſſiſtance in a buſineſs of ſuch high import and advantage to my Fellow-Citizens as extinguiſhes in me all Ariſtocratical and Patrimonial Prejudices, and inclines me to prove the circulation of the Engliſh blood in my veins, by endeavouring to aſſimilate the Conſtitution of my poor Country, as much as poſſible, to that of one which has for many ages exhibited the greateſt ſpectacle of humanity, and the moſt intereſting fabric of Political Conſtitution that ever aroſe in the world.

May it recover from the diſeaſes which age and incident have brought upon it! May my dear native Country co-operate with her in the noble regimen of that healing art in Government which is the Philoſopher's Stone, and the Panacea of Politics! May my little name be remembered as a Scottiſh Peer who dared to be ſingular, and to be unſwayed by number or example in the proſecution of a conduct dictated to him by reaſon, and foſtered by an enthuſiaſtic attachment to the principles of lawful Liberty, and the franchiſes of Britons. *

I have the pleaſure to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient and faithful

humble ſervant,

BUCHAN.

* The Editor has felt much regret on finding that his Letter to the Earl of Buchan, to which his Lordſhip's Letter of the 2d of December, 1782, is an anſwer, has not been preſerved among the Papers of the Committee; and that his anſwer to this ſecond Letter by Lord Buchan is alſo loſt.

NUMBER

NUMBER XLIII.

Paper I.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Sir CECIL WRAY, Bart.

BURTON-HALL, *Dec. 9th*, 1782.

Dear Sir,

FINDING ſome parts of my late political conduct are miſunderſtood, and diſapproved by the Committe of London, and their diſapprobation publiſhed in the News Papers, in a Letter to me ſigned by their Chairman, I wiſh to loſe no time in communicating to you *my exculpation.** If, in conſequence of that explanation, I ſhall ſtand juſtified in your opinion, as having acted a conſiſtent part, I ſhall indeed be happy.—I return you my warmeſt acknowledgments of the very friendly manner in which, at a late Meeting of the Electors of Weſtminſter, you declared yourſelf convinced of the honeſty of my conduct.

I am, dear Sir,
With great reſpect,
Your moſt obedient ſervant,
C. WYVILL.

* See in the 2d Vol. of theſe Political Papers the Editor's Letter to Mr. Alderman Croſby—Number IX. Paper IV.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Letter *from* Sir CECIL WRAY, Bart. *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE the favour of yours, with the inclosed Copy of your Letter to the London Committee, of which you deſire my opinion.

I do not know that your conduct requires the leaſt vindication.—The zeal with which you have forwarded the Reform of Parliament, as it demands our gratitude, ſo it ought to exempt you from obloquy where your own judgment directs you to ſteps different from the wiſhes of others, perhaps, but aſſuredly tending to the ſame deſired ends.

The manner in which you underſtood the buſineſs at the Thatched Houſe is certainly not inconſiſtent with the meaſures of the York Committee. I own we did not underſtand it in the ſame way. The arguments againſt adopting the Duke's ſyſtem were equally applicable to any other; and, *as we thought*, it had better originate in the Houſe, than in any particular Committee, as Counties might differ in their opinions, and therefore we thought it better to have *one* hare ſtarted, than divide the purſuit.

Inſtructions to your Members have the ſame bad tendency. The County cannot be called together every day, and conſequently your inſtructions muſt be permanent, and

perhaps

perhaps your Members may be thrown into a line by themſelves. The adoption of ſpecific meaſures in the County of York may alſo by *cool friends* be treated as too aſſuming.

I hope you will excuſe the freedom of this, as well as the hurry in which it is written.—I left Town this morning, and am now at Stamford, in my way home—not impoſſible but I may ſee you on the 19th.

I am,

With the greateſt regard,

Your very humble ſervant,

CECIL WRAY.

STAMFORD, 14th Dec.

* A Letter ſimilar to that which is the firſt Paper in this Number, had been ſent by the Editor to Viſcount Mahon, now Earl Stanhope, whoſe moſt friendly anſwer has been preſerved, and would have been inſerted here, if his Lordſhip had approved it. He concurred with Sir Cecil Wray in the opinion that the Editor's conduct required no exculpation; that is, as he underſtands their meaning, that he was guilty of no breach of what was expreſsly agreed. But as he acted in a manner not expected nor approved by Earl Stanhope and Sir Cecil Wray, he conceives himſelf not to be free from blame on this occaſion.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Sir CECIL WRAY, Bart.

BURTON-HALL, *April* 4, 1803.

Dear Sir,

I INCLOSE for your inſpection a copy of your Letter to me, dated the 14th of December, 1782, which I wiſh to publiſh in my fourth volume of Political Papers, if, on peruſing it, you ſee no objection. My reaſon for this wiſh is, not that I may thus obtain an opportunity to controvert any poſition in your Letter, or to defend my Letter to Alderman Croſby and the conduct which had been blamed by him, but really and truly to acknowledge, that though I ſtill think my motive was a good one for adviſing the Yorkſhire Committee to adopt ſpecific propoſitions of Reform *in a declaratory Reſolution*, and that ſuch advice was not inconſiſtent with any engagement I had entered into at the Thatched Houſe Meeting in 1782, yet I committed an error or impropriety of conduct, which I now ſee and wiſh to confeſs; and hence I would take occaſion alſo to explain how that fault might have been avoided, with a view to impreſs on others, who may hereafter endeavour to promote thoſe temperate Reforms which the

the Yorkſhire Committee in vain recommended, how neceſſary it is, in ſuch buſineſs, to guard againſt increaſing diſſentions, even at the very moment of endeavouring to obviate them, by taking due care to avoid in their conduct whatever may excite expectations, to which, perhaps, their future conduct cannot exactly correſpond, without riſque or injury to the Public Cauſe.

From the publication of the 4th volume, in the apathy of the Nation, at preſent, little effect can be expected; but I truſt the time will come, when Liberty will be valued as it ought, and Reform will again be contended for with better ſucceſs, as it muſt be, or Popular Rights will be finally ſwallowed up by Monarchal Power. And when the attempt to reſtore thoſe Rights ſhall be renewed, it may be uſeful to the worthy Patriots who may then engage in it, to be clearly informed what was done by the Reformers of our day. They may thus be better prepared to encounter and ſurmount the difficulties they will be ſure to meet, and may not only reap inſtruction from what was right and prudent in the plans and conduct of their predeceſſors, but may profit even from their errors.

Such are my views in making this requeſt, your compliance with which I ſhall moſt gratefully acknowledge. But if you have a wiſh that your Letter ſhould not appear, I certainly ſhall lay aſide the idea of publiſhing it, and my confeſſion of blamable conduct, in

the caſe alluded to, may be poſtponed, or wholly ſuppreſſed.

I am,

With the greateſt regard,

Dear Sir,

Moſt truly your's,

C. WYVILL.*

* The Editor owes his thanks to Sir Cecil Wray for his compliance with this requeſt, and he pays them with the greateſt ſatisfaction. He feels a pleaſure in being obliged to this unblemiſhed Patriot, and an honeſt pride in his friendly regard and eſteem, continued through all the variations of political opinion, during more than twenty years.

With reſpect to the error committed by the Editor, on the aſion here alluded to, the publication of theſe Letters, compared with his Letter to Alderman Croſby, and the Reſolutions at the firſt of the Thatched Houſe Meetings, renders any farther explanation unneceſſary. It is evident that he is free from the blame of having failed to fulfil what was expreſsly agreed at the Meeting in queſtion. It is equally evident that his conduct was contrary to the expectations formed in conſequence of what he ſaid, and omitted to ſay, on that occaſion. This he ought to have foreſeen, as a probable conſequence of what then paſſed; and he ought to have reſerved to himſelf the liberty of recommending to the Yorkſhire Committee ſpecific articles of Reform in inſtructions, or declaratory reſolutions; he ought to have declared expreſsly, that in ſome ſuch mode he might feel himſelf bound to bring forward ſpecific propoſitions, though he agreed to the propriety of framing Petitions *in general terms*, in which all could unite. The omiſſion of this precautionary declaration was a very conſiderable overſight, for which he certainly deſerves reprehenſion.

NUMBER

NUMBER XLIV.

Paper I,

Letter *from* Viſcounnt MAHON *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

LONDON, *Feb.* 14, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I YESTERDAY made my Motion in the Houſe of Commons, and I was well pleaſed with the reception I met with in the Houſe. Some perſons may imagine that a different line of conduct would have been more likely to be attended with ſucceſs.—If I had not tried *that* laſt year, and had not reaſon to think that I was right (as to the ſucceſs of the meaſure itſelf) in not tamely acquieſcing in the manner in which the meaſure was loſt, I ſhould have been leſs oſtenſibly firm about it.

I conceive ſome Reform to be the moſt neceſſary of all objects; and as long as there are hopes of ſucceſs, (which there are circumſtances to renew) I will not abandon the buſineſs.

I have been informed by a Yorkſhire Gentleman of great credit, that the Gentlemen in

that part of the Country are diſpleaſed at nothing having been done laſt year, and at the rejection of my County-Election Bill. If this fact be ſo, I wiſh extremely you would relate it directly to Mr. Wilberforce, in a Letter to be ſhewn, if neceſſary. And if *you are*, as *I am*, quite clear of opinion that the Bill for appointing different places of Poll for Yorkſhire, &c. cannot be founded on any principle that will *not* be liable to endleſs difficulty and objection, except it be on the principle of making the Returning Officer and the Deputy Sheriffs *miniſterial*, inſtead of *judicial* Officers, I wiſh particularly that you would urge that circumſtance. For there are ſome Members who (not looking to any Polling Bill) wiſh to eſtabliſh a Regiſter on the principle of Mr. Powys's Land-Tax Aſſeſſment, where the Sheriff muſt be judicial. If a Polling Bill for Yorkſhire be founded on that Plan, it will *fail*, when attempted to be executed in the County at any Election. The meaſure will then be diſgraced, (even ſhould ſuch a meaſure paſs Parliament) which it would, as it would ſtrengthen the objections to the Plan beyond meaſure; the conſequence of this would be, that the object would be more completely damned, than if nothing were to be attempted at all at preſent. You will recollect that I attempted to write a Bill on *that* principle *at firſt*, but I ſee clearly, how well I did not to purſue that idea, as it would be attended with inconvenience without end. If

If you agree with me in the outline of the above, I wish you to warn your two worthy Representatives against consenting to take a bad Plan, in preference to a good one. Let them press for the best. It will not even be more easy to attain a bad one. For it is not *this* Bill, or *that* Bill, but *every* Bill of Reform that is detested by men of certain principles.—The Plan ought to be (and I hope is) to endeavour to beat them.

Dear Sir,

Ever affectionately your's. *

Rev. C. Wyvill.

* The signature of Viscount Mahon is omitted here, as in many other Letters received from his Lordship by the Editor. His grateful thanks are due to him for his obliging permission to publish this Letter, and the subsequent one, dated Dec. 29th, 1786, not long after the death of his highly-respected Father.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Viſcount MAHON.

BURTON-HALL, *Feb.* 19*th*, 1786.

My dear Lord,

I HAVE, by no means changed my opinion, ſince I had laſt the pleaſure to converſe with your Lordſhip, on the ſubject of your Election-Bill. I then thought, and I ſtill think it would eſtabliſh a material improvement of the Conſtitution, if conſidered only as a ſingle meaſure, unconnected with any other propoſition of Reform; but taken as an indiſpenſable part of Mr. Pitt's Plan, in which light it ought to be conſidered, it acquires freſh importance, and becomes an object which well deſerves the greateſt exertion to attain it. It is alſo, in my apprehenſion, a meaſure which probably might be carried by a ſtrenuous effort *now;* but which the Court may feel itſelf ſufficiently ſtrong, a year or two hence, to refuſe to Mr. Pitt, however earneſtly he might then inſiſt upon it. And I am inclined to think it would be for Mr. Pitt's intereſt, that he and his friends ſupported the Bill effectually, while his adminiſtration went on ſmoothly, rather than that they ſuffered it to be loſt now, for want of ſufficient exertion, from the expectation of being

being better able to carry it ſome years hence. Such expectation hardly can be well founded. It is perhaps much more probable, that by that time diſſentions may have ariſen in a Cabinet haſtily formed in the moment of diſtreſs; and conſequently compoſed of perſons whoſe ſentiments differ widely on points of the firſt importance. If ſuch diſſentions ſhould break out, not only the meaſure itſelf would be loſt, but any exertions which Mr. Pitt might then make to carry it, would loſe their merit with the Public. The Miniſter's preſſing the Election-Bill, and other meaſures of the ſame tendency, would then be conſidered as an attempt to gain popularity, becauſe the ſupport of popularity was wanted; and preſſing it, if thoſe diſſentions ſhould end in Mr. Pitt's retirement from Power, would have too much the appearance of Oppoſition-Policy, and teazing a new Government with an unpleaſant queſtion adopted for that purpoſe ſolely. But if the Bill were ſtrenuouſly ſupported now, the Miniſter would reap the full credit of having ſincerely done his utmoſt to carry this Conſtitutional Improvement; and I think the conſequence would be, that the Public would alſo be convinced, that he had been equally ſincere in the propoſal more immediately his own, for a ſyſtematic improvement of our Repreſentation. In this reſpect, nothing can be more unjuſt than the ſuſpicions and diſſatisfaction which I have found in this part of the Country, and which, I believe, have been excited partly by the

Opponents

Opponents to Mr. Pitt's Adminiſtration, and partly by his Colleagues in Power, who are averſe from any ſcheme of Parliamentary Reformation. I have laboured, wherever I met with ſuch ill-founded jealouſies, to remove them, and frequently not without ſucceſs. But I believe ſuch jealouſies ſtill prevail in Yorkſhire, and probably in other parts of the kingdom, to a conſiderable extent. And if the attempt to carry this Bill ſhould be defeated again, in the manner it was laſt year, it is probable the diſguſt would be much increaſed.

I have now given my opinion, fully and without reſerve, on this part of your Lordſhip's Letter. With reſpect to that part which remains to be anſwered, my ſentiments accord with your's entirely; but I fear it would anſwer no good purpoſe to offer them to our two worthy friends. Reſpecting your Lordſhip's introductory ſpeech, which you had the goodneſs to incloſe, I do think the doctrines advanced by the Chancellor laſt year, when he threw out the Election-Bill, richly deſerve your correction; but whether the correction you have given will be ſerviceable or not, it might perhaps have been adminiſtered in a different ſtage of the buſineſs with leſs diſſatisfaction to our friends.

I am, with the greateſt regard,

My dear Lord,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Paper III.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* Earl STANHOPE.

BURTON-HALL, *Dec. 17th*, 1786.

My Dear Lord,

THOUGH from vexation I did not anſwer your Lordſhip's Letters, nor acknowledge the having received the very intereſting intelligence you had the goodneſs to ſend me, I hope I need not aſſure you how much I was obliged by both. In truth, it was too mortifying to me to ſee how all our hopes are fallen, after ſo fine a proſpect of ſucceſs in what I deem the only cauſe deſerving a ſtruggle. Not that I mean any thing like commotion by that word ſtruggle, but I think it beneath a man of ſpirit and virtue, who has generous views of ſerving the Public, to engage in any political conteſt, however it may be peacefully conducted, which has not for its object the promotion of meaſures neceſſary for the preſervation of Public Liberty.—Others, who paſs for men of honour, may contend for this Leader or for that, and plead for it private friendſhip, attachment to a Party, or the ſuppoſition that a better adminiſtration of affairs may be expected from theſe Public Men than from others; but I am perſuaded that ſome little, paltry, ſelfiſh motive will generally be found lurking at bottom under theſe various pretences. In ſimilar

ſituations,

ſituations, the plan and principles of every Government are nearly alike. There may be much greater abilities in the Cabinet at one period than another; the conſequence will uſually be, that the plan of Government, whatever the temper, underſtanding, and faculties of the Nation, combined with other circumſtances, may determine that to be, will be executed with greater dexterity and ſucceſs by thoſe who have the greateſt ſhare of abilities, but in the plan itſelf little or no difference will take place. At preſent, a virtuous Miniſter, ſuch as I conceive Mr. Pitt to be, muſt conduct his Adminiſtration on principles inferior, in an extreme degree, to his own worthy views. He muſt act thus, or he muſt ruin his Adminiſtration by an attempt to govern more virtuouſly than the temper of the times, &c. require, or, in fact, would endure; ſo that if the radical faults in the frame of Government remain, the natural effect of thoſe corrupting circumſtances will follow, with far leſs variation, of more or leſs evil, than Party Zealots are apt to imagine. The true object of Public Spirit, therefore, is, to correct thoſe radical faults, and then a good Miniſter will be able to govern up to his own principles, and a bad Miniſter will not be able to govern by *his*.

I am ſenſible, my Lord, how entirely miſplaced theſe remarks would be, were they deſigned as an exhortation to your Lordſhip to perſevere in that truly diſintereſted conduct which has hitherto ſo honourably, and

I fear

I fear I muſt add, ſo ſingularly marked your character. But the conſiderations which I wiſh to ſuggeſt in conſequence of them are ſomewhat different. It is but too evident, that the Party for Political Reformation is weak, and diſpirited, and without ſome acceſſion of ſtrength, from favourable events, its efforts are not likely to be attended with ſucceſs, at leaſt not to any great extent. In this ſituation, it ſeems to be our true policy to cultivate, as much as poſſible, a good underſtanding with thoſe Friends to our meaſures who, from various Perſonal and Party motives, have yet given them but a faint and inefficient ſupport, ſince the unfortunate ſeparation of the Popular Party. Chance, which produced that diviſion, may bring on a re-union; Perſonal and Party motives may ceaſe to operate ſo extenſively, or rather may take a new direction, and operate to our advantage: in a few years events may happen which are unforeſeen at preſent, by which the Nation may be rouſed once more to a ſenſe of its danger from the corruptions of Parliament; Mr. Pitt's Plan of Reformation may then be adopted as the meaſure of the United Popular Party; and in that caſe its ſucceſs, either in the ſyſtem, or in detail, cannot be very remote.

But if time is not to produce thoſe fortunate events, during the preſent age, it is ſtill of the utmoſt conſequence to prevent the farther ſubdiviſion of the Friends of Political Reformation. I moſt particularly deprecate a rupture between your Lordſhip and Mr. Pitt.

Pitt. In his attempt to reform our Repreſentation he was ill ſupported in Parliament, and moſt ſhamefully deſerted by the majority of thoſe Counties who had ſo loudly demanded that Reformation. It would be unjuſt, I think, to charge him with inſincerity, either becauſe he did not carry the great queſtion, or becauſe, having loſt it, he did not inſtantly reſign. On the contrary, I truſt, his conduct, in retaining his ſituation, will prove ultimately beneficial to the cauſe. I even entertain freſh hopes of ſucceeding ſo far by his aſſiſtance, as that we may gain your Lordſhip's County-Election Bill, under certain modifications, and alſo ſeveral other points of great importance, as ſubſidiary parts of the ſyſtem.

It is true, the County-Election Bill was loſt in the Houſe of Lords laſt year in a ſtrange manner; and in the preſent year, notwithſtanding a very reſpectable ſupport from Mr. Pitt's immediate connections, was again defeated there by a formidable coalition of the King's Friends and the Whig Ariſtocracy. But it is in vain to attempt to diſguiſe the truth from ourſelves; the Bill really was not popular out of doors, and it was ſtill leſs liked in the Houſe of Commons. The principles of the Bill are indeed unexceptionable, but the regulations deviſed for eſtabliſhing a perfect Regiſter were thought by many of our Friends too complicated and troubleſome, as well as too remote from the preſent practice, therefore likely to create great diſguſt among the bulk of ordinary Freeholders, to whom

thoſe

thoſe regulations would have been miſrepreſented as ſo many reſtraints of their moſt valuable franchiſe. A diminution of good votes alſo, from neglect to comply with the new proviſions, was much apprehended by ſome of our warmeſt Friends, who ſtrenuouſly ſupport the principles, who even voted for the Bill, but who ſeemed heartily glad it was not carried. Could we then expect our Friend to force through the Houſe of Lords, againſt the decided opinion of two of the ſtrongeſt Parties in it, a Bill ſo doubtingly paſſed by the Houſe of Commons, and ſo little reliſhed by the People? I think not. But if thoſe objections can be removed by certain modifications; if the regulations which are thought too troubleſome, inſtead of being extended to every caſe were applied only to thoſe where fraud might really be ſuſpected, and other parts of the plan were accommodated as much as poſſible to the preſent practice, the meaſure, I doubt not, might be introduced into the Houſe of Commons afreſh, with more general ſatisfaction to the People, and a more hearty concurrence of our Friends in Parliament. In that caſe, I flatter myſelf Mr. Pitt would interfere, boldly and effectually, to accompliſh the buſineſs, and ſucceſs in this material reſpect would probably lead to other important acquiſitions.

What I have now thrown out, with perfect ſincerity and confidence, to your Lordſhip, is not the mere reſult of my own ſanguine ſpeculations.

culations.—In a late correſpondence with Mr. Wilberforce, I have had the pleaſure to find his ideas on theſe ſubjects, in the main, coincide with mine. He even was the firſt to mention his reſolution to bring the ſubject of your Bill before the Houſe next winter, but he ſeems to think of modifying it by ſome alteration which he did not explain. I applauded this reſolution, and ſeized the opportunity to ſtate my opinion ſtrongly of the neceſſity there is, in other views beſide that of the public advantage, that County Elections ſhould be regulated in ſome mode on the principle of your Bill; and alſo, that other meaſures, above alluded to, ſhould be introduced with an effectual ſupport. From the anſwer of Mr. Wilberforce, I have no doubt of a perfect concurrence of ſentiment on his part, and, conſequently, that in the courſe of next Seſſion great exertions may be expected from him. Thus far I think myſelf allowed to impart, *in confidence*, to your Lordſhip, what paſſed in that correſpondence, though, in compliance with Mr. Wilberforce's opinion, I forbear a more particular explanation.

I fear the health of that excellent friend is far from being well eſtabliſhed; I underſtand he is gone to Bath with his ſiſter, who is very much indiſpoſed. It is but too probable that attention to her health, and the weak ſtate of his own, may render the buſineſs of modifying your Bill too laborious a taſk, eſpecially

as

as his eyes continue much affected by his old diſorder. I have therefore been trying to aſſiſt him, by throwing together ſome thoughts on the ſubject, which, when digeſted, ſhall be communicated to your Lordſhip.* In the mean-time

I am,

With perfect regard and eſteem,

My Lord,

Your's moſt affectionately,

C. WYVILL.

* This alludes to a Propoſal for eſtabliſhing a Regiſter of Voters in the Counties, on the principle on which the yearly Liſt of Jurors is formed throughout the kingdom. It is altogether needleſs to enlarge upon it here. It was communicated ſoon after this time to Lord Stanhope, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Wilberforce.

Paper IV.

Letter *from* EARL STANHOPE *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

CHEVENING, *Dec. 24th*, 1786.

Dear Mr. Wyvill,

I SHOULD have anſwered your's of the 17th inſtant ſooner, had I not been abſent for two days from this place.—I am much obliged to you for your communication, and as I know you wiſh me to ſpeak with ſincerity, I will tell you my opinion freely. I confeſs that I fear much from the ſort of modifications of the Bill which you mention, and I

would wish to recommend to you to act with peculiar caution in this buſineſs. Conſider its importance; it is one of thoſe things upon which I do not like experiments. You ſay the Bill was not popular out of doors. It always appeared to me to have been very little known out of doors, any further than its title; and I conceive that none of us, under ſuch circumſtances, have ſufficient data to declare it either popular or unpopular with the People at large.

You ſay it was ſtill leſs popular in the Houſe of Commons. I believe that you will agree with me, that I know more than either you or our friend Wilberforce upon *that* ſubject; for I am ſure I ſpeak within compaſs, when I aſſert that I have had converſations with conſiderably above *one hundred and fifty Members* of the Houſe of Commons upon that Bill, one by one, and I aver that the Bill was as well liked by the *generality* of Members in that Houſe as any meaſure I ever heard ſuggeſted, that tended towards a *ſubſtantial Reform of Parliament*, Mr. Grenville's popular and excellent Bill alone excepted. I know that ſome of thoſe who ſupported us had their doubts, that ſome few had more than doubts, that others were languid and far from eager, owing to that general ſupineneſs one day ſo juſtly complained of by Lord John Cavendiſh, with reſpect to all except *party* queſtions. What right has any man to tell you that that Bill was unpopular in the Houſe of Commons, when (ill ſupported as I was) not

not more than twenty in one year, and not more than twenty-two in another, could in any one ſtage be muſtered up againſt it? It was even better than we had reaſon to expect. But ſuppoſe, for argument, that the Bill had not been popular in the Houſe of Commons, was Mr. Pitt's Motion for a Reform popular in the Houſe of Commons, where it was rejected two to one? But was it on that account leſs excellent? Can we expect unanimity upon ſuch queſtions, even amongſt thoſe who call themſelves our friends? Do you expect that your alterations will diminiſh the number of our opponents? You are too well acquainted with the reaſons of *their* oppoſition, to believe it. It is not in the Houſe of Commons that we want ſtrength, but in the Houſe of Lords, and that for obvious reaſons.

There appears to me to be a plain, evident path for us to follow. The oppoſition to the Bill, this year, in the Houſe of Lords, was headed by the great friend of Lord Thurlow, the Biſhop of Bangor. He made no leſs than three ſpeeches againſt it. They were methodical and ſenſible, and, in my opinion, did him credit. He claſſed his objections under two heads.

1ſt, The interference (as by the Bill) of the Commiſſioners of the Land Tax. This objection there are eaſy and evident means to remedy, without affecting any one of the Principles of the Bill.

2dly, He laid the *greateſt* ſtreſs upon his objections to the *oath*, and expatiated much upon that ſubject. He ſtated ſpecially, that he did *not* object to the new oath, as more objectionable than the preſent oath; on the contrary, taking the different parts of the oath, one by one, he did not deny that the preſent was the moſt improper; but he contended (as did alſo Lord Sidney) that there ſhould be *no oath* of the kind (and I underſtand that he ſaid, *no oath at all* of any kind) at an Election. That this was an invincible objection, and I underſtand him pledged to this opinion.

I informed you I had waited upon the Biſhop afterwards, and of what paſſed. What can be more reaſonable than his agreeing to ſubſtitute, for the oath, a *ſimple declaration*, (even in like words) to which ſhould be annexed the penalties of perjury, inſtead of a pecuniary penalty, which was his original ſuggeſtion in the Houſe of Lords, and which was evidently abſurd, inaſmuch as a rich man may indemnify a poor man againſt a *fine*, but againſt the *pillory* it is impoſſible; beſide the riſque the rich man would run of incurring the heavy penalties of *ſubornation of perjury*.

We ought to join iſſue with the Biſhop, who, I truſt, has not altered his opinion on the ſubject ſince our converſation. *That* is what we have to do. The object you and Wilberforce have in view, is, no doubt, to appear to drop my Bill, in order to afford the

Lord

Lord C. &c. a fair and honourable retreat. Be it ſo.—I will join to applaud that policy; but do it, at leaſt, ſo as to ſatisfy Lord Thurlow's friend. Do not make alterations never hinted at even by one ſoul in the Houſe of Lords, but let the Biſhop of Bangor have the credit of having the Bill altered on purpoſe to meet his objections. The Lord C. may then conſiſtently ſupport your Bill of 1787, and abuſe my two former Bills. Let him do ſo, and I ſhould (then) not abuſe him in return, becauſe he would deſerve our thanks.

If you can really amend the Bill in other reſpects, without departing from the *principles* of it, well and good. But your Letter alarms me. You ſay the Bill was *too remote*, (in ſome perſons' opinion) "from the *preſent practice*." Why? Becauſe it is a regiſter, and becauſe no regiſter upon any principle of common ſenſe exiſts in the Counties of England. The very thing they object to, is the perfection of the Bill; for if it be *not remote* from the preſent practice, it will be but ill worth carrying.

You then propoſe that the ſaid *regulations*, "*inſtead of being extended to every caſe, ſhould be applied only to thoſe where fraud might really be ſuſpected.*" Now, I defy the ingenuity of the acuteſt man in the kingdom to carry into practical execution in the Bill this theory. How can ſuch diſtinction be made? Is it not notorious, that even Members of Parliament have voted at Elections without any *legal*

right? Conſider, my dear Sir, that our *great* object is to ground, on this Bill, a Polling Bill for Yorkſhire and for other Counties. In order to do *this*, the Regiſtering Officers ſhould be rendered merely *miniſterial*, inſtead of being judicial. *That* is the *leading* principle of my Bill. Now, he *cannot* be purely miniſterial, if the Regiſter be *not general*, or if he has any judgment of the kind alluded to.

Not having ſeen the modifications, which you kindly promiſed to ſend me, I cannot ſay more upon the ſubject; but I confeſs I ſhall much regret any departure from the principles of the Bill, as ſet forth in my printed Speech in the Houſe of Lords, and particularly if the new Bill be *not*, in all reſpects, ſuch as to be capable of ſerving as an eaſy and *certain foundation* for a *general Polling Bill* hereafter; I think it right, in fairneſs, to declare, that for one it ſhall never have my ſupport. Pray take care that we do not loſe ſome of our *beſt* friends in the Houſe of Commons by *ſuch kind* of alterations.

That excellent and reſpectable man, Mr. Wilberforce, has hitherto acted ſo well in this buſineſs, that I cannot write on this ſubject without expreſſing at the ſame time a wiſh that that valuable man may be appriſed of the part that an inſignificant individual decidedly means to act.

I cannot *write again* on this ſubject; but I much hope you will perſevere in your former intention of coming to London this

this winter, *not later* than the meeting of Parliament. Should you come up sooner, you know how *happy you would make me* to ſee you at this place.

Dear Sir,

Ever affectionately

and truly your's. *

* After the rejection of Mr. Pitt's Motion in 1785, for reforming the Repreſentation, Earl Stanhope and other Friends of Conſtitutional Liberty turned their thoughts and efforts to the means of rendering Elections, particularly in the Counties, as free as poſſible from tumult, expence, and improper influence of every ſort. Without ſome regulations of the kind alluded to, a Reformed Repreſentation would be found inſufficient to ſecure National Freedom; and with them, even the preſent defective Repreſentation might be ſerviceable in a conſiderable degree. The noble Lord, and his Coadjutors, therefore, were well employed; but in theſe purſuits they were unſucceſsful, as they had been before in thoſe reſpecting the Reform of our Repreſentation, and the Repeal of the Septennial Law.

Among the moſt efficacious means for purifying our Elections, were the eſtabliſhment of a Regiſter of Perſons intitled to vote, and the meaſure of Polling by Diſtricts or Pariſhes. The Regiſter propoſed by Earl Stanhope was repeatedly thrown out of the Houſe of Lords; yet, by his earneſt and preſſing ſolicitations, the deciſive aſſiſtance of Mr. Pitt was obtained at laſt, and the Regiſter Bill was paſſed into a Law. But after the Regiſter-Books had been printed and diſtributed at a great expence throughout the kingdom, its oppoſers were powerful enough, in the next Seſſion of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the Act in queſtion. The meaſure was quaſhed without allowing time to aſcertain its utility or the reverſe, by the experiment of a ſingle General Election. The oſtenſible reaſons for this conduct were, that it was too complicated a regulation, and too remote from the ancient practice: but the true objection was, that with the meaſure of Diſtrict Polling it formed a ſyſtem calculated, by reducing the expence of Elections, to emancipate the Counties from the influence of Wealth and a few powerful Families, and to enable the Body of Freeholders, in each County, to elect without ruining the Object of their Choice.—The Plan for eſtabliſhing a Regiſter leſs accurate perhaps, but more analogous to the practice in other caſes, was held for a time in view, with ſome hope of its adoption; but at laſt it was dropt, with the General Diſtrict Polling-Bill, and the local one for Yorkſhire. Such was the final reſult of this attempt

attempt to effect a Reform in the frame, duration, and Elections of the Britiſh Parliament: thus were this band of moderate Reformers defeated in the Plans which they had brought forward with the approbation of the wiſeſt Statesmen of the age, and with every appearance and promiſe of ſucceſs.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

Paper I.

Biographical Account *of* Sir GEORGE SAVILE, Bart. *communicated in* 1802, *to the* Editor, *by one of* Sir GEORGE SAVILE'S *moſt intimate* Friends.

SIR GEORGE SAVILE was the only ſon of Sir George Savile of Rufford, in the County of Notts, Bart. who was male heir, failing his own ſon, to Sir George Savile, Bart. Marquis of Halifax, from whom he inherited the old Baronetage, and by whom he was left heir to his great eſtates in Yorkſhire and Nottinghamſhire, in caſe his ſon, then living, ſhould die without male iſſue; his ſon leaving his Lady with child, and ſhe being brought to bed of a daughter, the family eſtates, after proviſion for the females, devolved to Sir George Savile, by the Will of the firſt Marquis of Halifax.

This Sir George Savile was ſome time Repreſentative in Parliament for the County of York, but being much afflicted with the gout, he declined that ſeat. He was a man of great probity and virtue, and attended himſelf to the education of his only ſon, whom he was principally ſtudious to make a virtuous

virtuous Man and an accompliſhed Gentleman: he truſted him not therefore to a public ſchool, but kept him at home under his own eye, which, though in a public life, it may be diſadvantageous to a young man of parts and genius, yet would have abundantly gratified his father's view, by producing a character of the ſtricteſt honour and moſt undiſſembled virtue that his Country ever knew.

His father dying when he was about ſeventeen, he was ſoon after removed to Queen's College, Cambridge, where his merit and philoſophical turn of mind drew upon him the reſpect and love of that Univerſity.—Juſt before this his eldeſt ſiſter, a young Lady of great merit and genius, was married to Mr. Thornhaugh of Oſburton, in the County of Notts, who ſoon afterwards took the name of Hewett, by the Will of Sir Thomas Hewett, Knt. and was Repreſentative in Parliament for the County of Notts.—Sir George's private life, till he was, on the death of Sir Conyers D'Arcy, choſen Repreſentative for the County of York, affords nothing remarkable; he paſſed it in rational and philoſophical purſuits, and in making his name agreeable to his Friends and neighbouring Gentlemen. When choſen to repreſent the County of York, he was juſtly ſenſible of the truſt committed to him, and attended accordingly to the duties of Parliament; but being contented with his own fortune, and not ambitious of Place or Peerage, both of which he might at any time have obtained, he choſe to remain

remain an independent man, and therefore avoided laying himſelf under any obligation to Miniſtry, though he generally acted with the Duke of Newcaſtle, (then Miniſter) and with his friend the Marquis of Rockingham. He was a ſteady friend to the Liberties of the Britiſh Conſtitution, which he well underſtood, and to which he ever attended. He took a ſtrong part againſt General Warrants; he brought into Parliament and carried the Nullum Tempus Act; he was conſtant in oppoſition to the principles and conduct of the American War; he ever avoided voting on Eaſt-India queſtions, having a mortal averſion to our management of affairs in the Country, and to our treatment of the native Princes there.

Sir George Savile was a friend to Rational Religion and Liberty of Conſcience, on the moſt enlarged principles. In 1772 he ſupported, but without ſucceſs, the Petition of thoſe Clergymen of the Church of England who complained to Parliament of the ſubſcription required to the metaphyſical ſyſtem compriſed in our 39 Articles of Religion. In the ſame Seſſion of Parliament he ſupported, with final ſucceſs, the claims of the Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters to be relieved from ſubſcription to the doctrinal part of thoſe Articles, as the condition of their Toleration. The Bill paſſed the Houſe of Commons in that Seſſion, and though rejected by the Peers at firſt, yet in a ſubſequent Seſſion their aſſent was obtained, and the Bill paſſed into a Law.

To

To the doctrines which diſtinguiſh the Roman Church, Sir George Savile was averſe, and he rejected their pretenſions to infallibility and an over-ruling authority in matters of Faith, with peculiar zeal. Yet, ſtill true to the Rights of Conſcience, he propoſed, in the Seſſion of 1778,* that Law which firſt relaxed thoſe penal ſeverities under which the Roman Catholics had ſuffered ſo long. His conduct on this occaſion excited the reſentment of that Aſſociation which was formed by Intolerant Proteſtants for the renewal of the Penal Statutes which had been ſo properly repealed. Placing Lord George Gordon at their head, in 1780 they aſſembled, at his inſtigation, in prodigious multitudes, to intimidate the moſt diſtinguiſhed Advocates of Toleration, and compel them to renounce the obnoxious meaſure. But Sir George Savile could not be moved from his benevolent purpoſe by their tumultuous rage, their menaces of perſonal outrage, and the actual firing of his houſe. In this extremity of danger he perſevered in the meaſure objected to, but he was not ſupported with equal firmneſs by Lord North and other profeſſed Friends of Toleration. Emboldened by their timidity, the miſguided populace proceeded with clamours to the doors of Parliament, demanding the reſtoration of the repealed Statutes. But the wavering reſolution of Parliament was confirmed by the fortitude of Sir George Savile, aided by Mr. Fox and other undaunted Patriots;

* Mr. Dunning ſeconded this motion of Sir G. Savile's.

Patriots; the Petition of Intolerant Men was diſmiſſed to an indefinite time; the Rioters were awed by the determination of Parliament, and this Humane Law remained unrepealed.

The laſt act of his public life was a ſtrenuous exertion for the Reform of Parliamentary Corruption, and for a juſter Repreſentation of the People in Parliament.—Amongſt other things it needs not be forgotten, that he formed and commanded one of the beſt Militia Regiments in the kingdom, (the Weſt York) to which he attended with zeal and aſſiduity.

His attention to the internal Navigation and Trade of the County of York; his more than common acquaintance with the philoſophical principles of Arts and Manufactures, his conceptions of which were facilitated by a naturally clear underſtanding and great power of reaſoning, enabled him to be of more ſervice to that County than merely as a Gentleman and Man of Honour he would otherwiſe have been. In the year 1753 he gave his younger ſiſter, Barbara, in marriage to Richard Lumley Sanderſon, Earl of Scarborough, by whom ſhe has left a large family, and on the ſecond ſon of which family he has entailed the chief part of his eſtate, and the name of Savile; and to his niece, the daughter of John Thornhaugh, Eſq; he left a ſhare of his eſtates in Ireland and elſewhere.

Such is the imperfection of human nature, that it is extremely difficult to direct political meaſures according to the ſtrict rules of juſtice,

tice, under any Government, whether free, arbitrary, or mixed. It is not therefore ſurpriſing that ſuch a mind as that of Sir George Savile ſhould revolt at the general turn of Politics, and avoid being deeply concerned in them. This was certainly one reaſon why he did not offer himſelf as a Politician, except in particular points, to which he was called by his ſituation. A tender conſtitution, ſubject to frequent fits of the aſthma, might be another reaſon for his engaging leſs in public debates; but when he did ſpeak, no man was more attended to or regarded in Parliament, all parties having but one opinion of his probity, honour, and good ſenſe. This is one leſſon to mankind, that undiſſembled virtue is ſure at laſt of gaining public eſteem, and this received farther confirmation by a General Vote of the County of York for erecting, at the County expence, a ſtatue to his memory, which was ſoon afterwards executed and placed in the Cathedral of York. His private charities were large, but ſtudiouſly kept ſecret from the world.

Paper II.

Letter *from the* Rev. C. Wyvill *to* John Cartwright, Esq; Brothertoft Farm, Boston.*

Burton-Hall, *May* 1, 1801.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE taken a few days to consider the subject of your printed Letter of the 14th of March, because it is of great importance to the Public that a National Opposition to the measures which have proved so calamitous, and to the abuses which have so nearly deprived us of all Constitutional Freedom, should be formed; but not of less importance, that it should be formed on grounds which appear most likely to afford the means of success. When a Nation which is intitled by its Constitution to Liberty, is forced by usurpation or oppression to resort to extraordinary measures for the redress of grievances, the importance of the end pursued certainly should bear some fair proportion to the magnitude of the means employed.

* Of this Letter two Editions were distributed by the Editor's Friends, because reputable Booksellers durst not publish it in the usual way. So unavailing had they found the protection of Law, in that unhappy time, when Ministers were not more zealous to accuse their Opponents, than Juries to convict them: so terrified were they by the rage of Loyalty, aided by the rigour of a Judge in some respects friendly to good morals, but narrow in his views of Public Advantage, severe and passionate in his temper, and, in cases of alleged Libel, eager to punish, as they supposed, when justice and common sense would demand an acquittal.

employed. To call forth the exertions of a Whole Nation, the object ſhould be adequate; nothing leſs than the attainment of ſuch a redreſs of grievances, ſuch a correction of abuſes as may ſecure the future enjoyment of Liberty, ſhould be propoſed; it ought to be a radical Reform, on the Principles of the Conſtitution; and there ought to be a rational ground to hope it might be attained by regular and pacific means. On this point, I conceive there is an intire concurrence of ſentiment between us; and conſidering the end thus limited to be the object we have in view, I ſhall take it for the foundation of my Anſwer to what you have offered in the Letter alluded to.

I would obſerve, then, that no Union of ſufficient extent to deſerve the name of a National Oppoſition, or to inſure ſucceſs in the way deſired, probably can be formed on the principle you have laid down. The objections of the Rich to Univerſal Suffrage appear to remain in full force; and powerful as your reaſoning is in the latter part of your Letter, I conceive it will be unable, in any ſenſible degree, to diminiſh their fears. By adhering to that principle therefore, in the propoſed Aſſociation, you will exclude a great majority of the well-diſpoſed perſons of that claſs, and oblige them either to range themſelves with the Supporters of a harſh and corrupt ſyſtem of Adminiſtration, or to remain inactive, and loſt to the Public Cauſe. This, I ſincerely think, will be the conſe-

quence

quence of conſulting Theory alone, inſtead of combining Theory, as I wiſh to recommend, with what Experience may teach to be practicable. If you will adhere to Speculation, without admitting any prudential modification, on account of ſubſiſting prejudices, in that caſe the proſpect before you will be a gloomy one. It will be, on the one hand, a ſcene of fruitleſs commotion, followed by the blood of many worthy, but raſh and unfortunate perſons, ſhed upon the ſcaffold, and the final eſtabliſhment of that Tyranny you wiſh to avert; or, on the other hand, granting for argument that it might prove a ſucceſsful effort, what will the reſult of it be, but the overthrow of the Conſtitution, effected by the violence of an irritated Democracy, overcoming, in this terrible ſtruggle, the united power of the Crown and Ariſtocracy, and their numerous adherents in the moſt opulent claſſes of the monied and mercantile intereſt? And what will this be, but a renewal of all the horrors of the French Revolution in this unfortunate Country, aggravated by the bitter reflection that they might have been avoided by more moderate meaſures, by a plan more cautiouſly limited at the outſet of your enterprize. Such, as I conceive, are the conſequences you have to expect, if you take grounds of Oppoſition too extenſive to be yielded by any compromiſe, and on which you cannot hope to be joined by the great majority of the Opulent.

But if you will conſent to blend Theory and Practical Prudence together, and demonſtrate to the Rich, by the very principle of your Aſſociation, that you are equally careful to protect Property and to ſecure Liberty, you will probably be ſupported by that part of the Rich who ſtill retain an affectionate attachment to Liberty; and you will even leſſen the violence of oppoſition on the part of thoſe Men of Opulence who are hoſtile to Liberty, either from prejudice or corruption. And you will gain theſe advantages without loſing any part of your ſtrength among the lower Claſſes of the People. For although the propoſed Aſſociation ſhould not extend the Right of Suffrage beyond the line drawn by Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, it ſtill would be the intereſt of the loweſt Claſſes to ſupport that plan; and I doubt not, they actually would ſupport it to the utmoſt extent of their ability. The principle adopted by Mr. Fox and his Friend, viz. to extend the Right of Suffrage to Houſeholders not receiving alms, as I think, moſt judiciouſly manifeſts a due regard to Property, united with the neceſſary ſecurity of Freedom. It is perhaps the neareſt approximation to theoretical perfection which could conſiſt with the ſtability of Property as it is now enjoyed in this Country. By adopting it, as the principle of your Aſſociation, you will ſecure the greateſt probability of ſucceſs in your pacific enterprzie, and be inſtrumental, I truſt, in procuring the greateſt poſſible Good to your Country, with the leaſt mixture

of

of Evil. You will act with the wiſdom of Solon, who being entruſted with power to Reform the State, gave the Athenians not the beſt Laws in Speculation, but the beſt which they could bear. The Engliſh Nation, by their morals, or by the diſtribution of their property, are not well fitted to receive Univerſal Suffrage. It is a privilege which they could not poſſibly acquire without a long ſeries of Calamity, which no political advantage could compenſate to the preſent generation. And were it at this moment an eſtabliſhed Right, it would be ill exerciſed by the ignorant and unprincipled part of the Poor; it would be deteſted by the proud and timorous part of the Rich; and at laſt, it would be ſurrendered by the profligate corruption of the former, or forcibly ſuppreſſed by the no leſs profligate ambition of the latter. You will do wiſely, therefore, and deſerve the warmeſt thanks of every Friend to Peace and Liberty, as I judge, if you will ground this new attempt to effect a Reform on the combined principles of Liberty and Property. Our Anceſtors, in their oppoſition to Deſpotiſm, were always careful to unite theſe two principles; and their ſucceſs was probably not leſs the effect of their Prudence, than of their Fortitude and Patriotic Zeal. What probably may be gained for the Public, by theſe prudential means, will be entire advantage; its value will be ineſtimably great; and it will be without mixture of miſery reſulting from the ſtruggle:

It will ſave this Country from the impending evils of Anarchy and Deſpotiſm: It will complete what was perhaps unavoidaby left unfiniſhed by the Revolution in the year 1688, and perpetuate the Engliſh Conſtitution by a timely Reform, on the joint principles of Liberty and Property. And by holding forth to the World a noble example of a rational and pacific Reform, it will again endear the name of Liberty to our Species; the dangerous tendency to wild Revolutions will ceaſe to terrify mankind; Military Deſpotiſm no longer will be ſought or endured, as a refuge from the rage of Democratic Innovation; and peaceful Improvement will gradually and univerſally mark the progreſs of Society to the attainment of the higheſt happineſs.

The moſt prominent of thoſe Patriots who may have engaged in this enterprize, the Duke of Bedford, Mr. Fox, Mr. Erſkine, and their illuſtrious Friends, who have ſupported theſe principles in Parliament, will undoubtedly receive the loudeſt applauſe of their Fellow Citizens, and will juſtly be claſſed by the gratitude of Poſterity among the greateſt Benefactors of their Country. And private perſons, like you, my dear Sir, and myſelf, retiring to their reſpective homes, in the evening of their days, without place or penſion, without title or profeſſional dignity, will enjoy in ſilence the proud but unenvied ſatisfaction to have ſerved the Public with diſintereſted zeal and integrity, while the malig-

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nant tongue of Malice could impute no ſiniſter motive to their conduct.

And ſurely this ground might be taken, without inconſiſtence, by the moſt ſtrenuous Advocate of Univerſal Suffrage. In his publications he has maintained, and always will maintain, that mankind by nature are intitled to equal rights. He finds, however, that the Engliſh Nation are not now in the ſtate of Nature, but in a ſtate of imperfect Society, in which, though many things are right, ſome are wrong. Indeed, ſo wrong they are, that the utmoſt caution will be indiſpenſibly neceſſary to avoid meeting ruin in one horrid form, from that very attempt to correct a deeply-diſordered Legiſlature, without which ruin in a different, but not leſs frightful ſhape, muſt inevitably overtake us.—With perfect conſiſtency, therefore, he might hold his principles, and yet in practice concur in any approximation to his theory, which the temper of the times would bear. This would be more than mere blameleſs conſiſtency; it would be a virtuous and laudable policy, ſkilfully availing itſelf of exiſting circumſtances, to educe from them the greateſt good, and as much as poſſible exclude all evil. It would be true Patriotiſm, connected with wiſdom; in practice extending the moſt effectual aſſiſtance to the cauſe of Reformation and human happineſs at preſent, while in ſpeculation it held forth thoſe principles on which, in ſome happier age of greater Public Virtue, of moderation and benevolence more diffuſed

among the Rich; of knowledge, integrity, and order more generally manifeſted by the Poor, Society may admit its final improvement.

It muſt be owned, that no very near and diſtinct proſpect is here opened to a ſettlement of Society on the principle of Perſonal Repreſentation. Were the Conſtitution improved on the mixt principles I have recommended, ages might elapſe before ſuch a change of manners in the two extreme claſſes would be effected, as would duly qualify the Nation for the adoption of Univerſal Suffrage, without exciting a general oppoſition from the Rich, and without the certainty of its abuſe by the Poor. Yet it ſeems evident, that till that deſirable change of manners has been produced, no permanently happy ſettlement would reſult from the introduction of Perſonal Repreſentation; and therefore, till then, the attempt to introduce it appears premature and unadviſable. In the depraved ſtate of national manners at preſent, to make the attempt were to riſque abſolute defeat and the ruin of Public Liberty, attended with all the calamities of the moſt imbittered Civil War, only to eſtabliſh a plan of Government on principles too purely theoretical to be maintained or endured in practice by a Nation which has departed ſo widely from the ſimplicity of Nature. The evil habits which are the conſequence of an extremely unequal diſtribution of property form the principal objection to Univerſal Suffrage; and that impediment muſt

muſt be removed, before the Advocate of Reformation on that principle can hope to ſucceed. To aſſiſt the Cauſe of Freedom by correcting thoſe evil habits, Agrarian Laws, and other devices for a more equal diſtribution of Property, have been propoſed in various ages and countries, and recently in this. But the violence and palpable injuſtice of all theſe propoſals, in the recent inſtance, as well as on former occaſions, have but ſerved to promote the views of men hoſtile to Liberty, by ſpreading through all the ranks of Opulence a general panic: and thus the conſequence has been the aggravation of the evils complained of, by the very means propoſed to alleviate or remove them. Undoubtedly, my worthy Friend deteſts the principles of Anarchy and Plunder as much and as ſincerely as the moſt wealthy Alarmiſt. Undoubtedly he pleads the Cauſe of Univerſal Suffrage, confiding that in the ſtruggle of contending paſſions and oppoſite intereſts, the voice of Reaſon may be heard, and Organization may allay the tumult, preſerve the Monarchy, and ſecure or reſtore the tranquillity of the Country. It is impoſſible for me to doubt the purity of his intentions. But in his honeſt zeal for the welfare of the great Body of the People, I fear, he overlooks or ſlightly regards the difficulties and dangers which beſet the road he has taken. It is my duty to point them out, and to warn him, that in the moment of popular exaſperation and fearful apprehenſion among the Rich, no mode of

Regulation, no device of Organization probably would poſſeſs ſufficient efficacy to calm the panic of the alarmed Rich, or to reſtrain the fury of the enraged Poor: It is mine, at ſuch a moment, to diſſuade the attempt to Reform too far, or too faſt; and to ſtop, if poſſible, the tendency to Revolution. Injuſtice and Oppreſſion already have given a ſtrong impulſe in that direction to the great maſs of the People. But it much behoves them and their Adviſers to conſider, that no ſudden and violent tranſition from the rigour of Miniſterial Deſpotiſm to Democratic Licence, and from the mockery of a Nominal Repreſentation to the eſtabliſhment of Univerſal Suffrage, could be attempted by the People without great hazard to the intereſts of the Community. By graſping at too much, they would probably gain nothing; on the contrary, they might loſe all that yet remains of our Public Liberties. Firm and manly, but prudent and cautious counſels, therefore, ſhould now prevail. To attain that ſafe and radical Reform which has been propoſed in Parliament, will demand the utmoſt legal exertions of the People united with their Parliamentary Friends. But by purſuing this ſeemingly circuitous road of gradual and temperate Reformation, they will not abandon the complete Reſtoration of Popular Rights: on the contrary, they will proceed in that path by which alone the object of their purſuit can be ſafely and ſucceſsfully approached. They will ſecure to the Nation the utmoſt

felicity

felicity of which it is capable at preſent; while under the influence of a milder adminiſtration of Government, and a progreſſive advancement in Knowledge, Morality, and a Rational Religion, it will be continually preparing itſelf for a farther and ultimate Reformation, to be eſtabliſhed at ſome point of futurity now beyond our ſight, with the general approbation of the Rich, on the principle of Perſonal Repreſentation.

But in the Popular Societies there may be ſome diſtruſt, latent, if not expreſſed, to the Stateſmen already alluded to, which may diſcourage the adoption of their plan. The Nation had been cheated by more than one Pretended Reformer before the late Miniſter thought fit to drop the maſque. Warned by repeated experience, the country will not haſtily yield its confidence to the profeſſions of Public Men. But caution, puſhed to exceſs, may by be as pernicious to the Public Cauſe as even credulity has been; and though groundleſs diſtruſt can excite no ſurpriſe, after treachery often experienced, it were neither wiſe nor juſt in this inſtance to adopt the diſtruſt of the Societies in queſtion. The truth of this aſſertion will ſufficiently appear from a ſhort comparative view of the circumſtances which evidently diſtinguiſh the character and conduct of Mr. Pitt, from the manly wiſdom and virtue which intitle Mr. Fox to the confidence of the Public.

In the character of Mr. Pitt, when in his early youth he acquired our good opinion, there

was

was the ſuppoſed ingenuous candor natural at that age, with every favourable impreſſion from Education and Parental Authority, undefaced by the wear and friction of Office, and untarniſhed by the filth of Corruption. It was right to truſt him then, becauſe he had the power, and profeſſed the will to ſerve the Public; and by repoſing truſt in his profeſſions of zeal, at a time when Peace had cooled the ardour of Reformers, no opportunity to ſerve the cauſe of Reformation was ſuffered to paſs. But a few years have proved the emptineſs of thoſe profeſſions, and ſhewn that the firm ſubſtance of a virtuous mind, which could be proof againſt every attempt of Power to warp it from the line of rectitude, was wanted there. And where that is wanted, there may be art, there may be eloquence, financial ſkill, and every other requiſite qualification to form a Miniſter, fit to lead a degenerate Parliament; but there cannot be that virtuous uniformity of principles and conduct which is the only baſis of a noble Character, and on which alone Faith can be repoſed without the riſque of Diſappointment.

But now, War, with its concomitant miſeries, has again evinced the neceſſity, and excited the popular wiſh for Reformation. It behoves us, with a wiſe caution, but with vigour alſo, to avail ourſelves of this renewed opportunity, and ſhunning a blind credulity, to beware, on the other hand, leſt we injure the Public Cauſe, by refuſing confidence where it is juſtly due.

In

In ſeveral of the moſt diſtinguiſhed Opponents of Mr. Pitt in each Houſe of Parliament, the reverſe of thoſe circumſtances may be obſerved, which mark his character and conduct with deſerved diſtruſt. But to compare only the foremoſt of his Antagoniſts: There is in him a character formed by Time, Experience, and Adverſity, to that unbending Firmneſs which is fitted for the arduous taſk he has undertaken. With too much penetration to be deceived by a wily Court, with too much philanthropy, too ſtrong a ſenſe of Honour and Juſtice to betray the Public to its ruin, he poſſeſſes that ſcorn of Power, ill-gotten and ill-employed, that philoſophic dignity of mind, that grandeur of conſiſtency, which his inferior Rival never could attain. This the conduct of his maturer age has proved, and it forms the ſureſt pledge that Yourſelf is not more ſincerely devoted to the Cauſe of Freedom than Mr. FOX.

Proneneſs to ill-founded jealouſy is the vice of weak and ignoble minds. It cannot therefore be a fault of which I can believe my Friend is capable. In the caſe under conſideration, I might aſſert, without fear of contradiction, that he cannot doubt the ſincerity of Mr. Fox. If my reaſoning has been juſt, if the principle recommended has been ſhewn to be beſt adapted to the exigency of this conjuncture, he will not heſitate to embrace it in practice, unmoved by the diſtruſt of ſome Popular Bodies, which he feels to be groundleſs; and unawed by the poſſible charge of inconſiſtence,

inconſiſtence, which now he can repel with as much eaſe, as he before repelled it, when he generouſly ſupported the leſs extended plan of Mr. Pitt.

It ought not to be diſſembled, however, that there is an objection unnoticed yet, and totally inapplicable to my worthy Friend, which wears too plauſible an appearance, and is too likely, through their very virtues, to delude men well-diſpoſed to the Public Cauſe, to be paſſed without a brief but attentive conſideration. There is a contempt generally felt by ſuch men for the Parties which have long divided, and alternately governed England: and it muſt be owned, that theſe Parties have but too frequently deſerved this diſgrace by their diſregard of the Public welfare, and their ſhameleſs purſuit of ſelfiſh advantage. Hence the fear which in virtuous men is obſervable to be involved in their diſgrace: hence the anxiety to ſhun powerful connections, and the reproachful appellation of a Partizan. But this honourable fear, this virtuous anxiety, may be pretended, where it is not felt; and even where it is, may be carried to an extreme which is unreaſonable and hurtful to the Public. For when the Power of the Crown is become nearly Deſpotic; when nearly all the ancient fences of Liberty have been overturned, and an immenſe accumulation of Patronage in the Crown, with the annual Diſpoſal of Fifty Millions of Money, imperiouſly calls upon every true Friend to his Country by timely

Union

Union to avert that dreadful calamity which is faſt approaching; and when men of extenſive influence and magnanimous character, of long experience, of tried integrity, and the moſt powerful abilities, have made a generous ſtand in Parliament againſt the invaſions of Power; when they have claimed redreſs for the Nation on the wiſeſt and moſt effectual principles, and pledged themſelves never to accept Official Station without the ſtipulated condition of that radical Reform; and when, after a fruitleſs ſtruggle, they have ſeceded from Parliament, and thus made their ſolemn appeal to the Public for ſupport: At ſuch a criſis, to reject Union with ſuch Men on any alleged feeling of a virtuous Scrupuloſity, or a noble Independence of Party-Connections, in my judgment muſt be deemed the exceſs of Folly, or the moſt conſummate Hypocriſy. It muſt proceed from a falſe delicacy and a fickly ſenſibility, of which the robuſt minds of men like you, Sir, cannot be ſuſceptible; or elſe from what muſt excite your ſcorn and deteſtation, from an affectation of Patriotic Purity, the excuſe of Sloth, the cover of Pride, or the mere prudery of pretended Patriotiſm, which would ſacrifice the ſubſtance to a falſe appearance of Virtue, and expoſe the Community to ruin from the Luſt of Power, by an aſſumed and extravagant refinement of Political Chaſtity.

If it had been the fate of this Country to have ſeen the Defence of her deareſt Rights abandoned by the Stateſmen alluded to, what

rational

rational hope would have remained that a timely Redreſs of her Grievances could be obtained by legal means? The proſpect before us would have been moſt afflicting; it would have precluded every glimpſe of Peaceful Reform, and opened to our view that long train of calamities which a conflict between Popular Deſperation and Miniſterial Tyranny would inevitably produce. The only objects of choice before us would have been Slavery, or that Reſiſtance by Brute Force, from which the Friends of their Country can hardly ever labour too earneſtly to diſſuade the People. At the view of ſuch miſery, on either hand, though but the fiction of imagination, our hearts ſink, and Deſpair freezes every faculty within us. But when we turn from this diſtreſſing alternative, to contemplate the characters and conduct of our Seceded Stateſmen, and the honoured Senators who approve and ſupport them, when ſuch men have demonſtrated their determined purpoſe never to abandon the Defence of the Conſtitution on its genuine principles, who does not feel himſelf re-animated, and his heart bounding with hope that all may yet be rectified, through Parliament, to the ſatisfaction of the Nation? Who does not feel it his duty to adhere to thoſe men who adhere to the intereſt of the Public? Who does not ſcorn the falſe or puerile imputation of Party Spirit applied to ſuch Adherence? Who does not reſolve never to abandon men who thus generouſly ſupport the Rights of the Community, and chearfully

to

to co-operate with them on their principles of a ſafe, yet radical Reform, on which alone the Freedom and Happineſs of the Community can be recovered and ſecured?

If I may indulge the hope that you are ſatisfied with my reaſoning, and content to admit the change propoſed in the Aſſociation, it will be to me matter of high gratification and encouragement. In that caſe you will readily anticipate the changes I wiſh to be made in your printed Letter. I would requeſt the omiſſion of the latter part of it, containing the Defence of Univerſal Suffrage, and in the former part I would propoſe an alteration of the Title of the Aſſociation. In my thoughts, it might be thus expreſſed, viz. "The Aſſociation for protecting Liberty and Property from the Dangers of Deſpotiſm and Anarchy, and for perpetuating the Limited Monarchy of this United Kingdom, by effecting a Parliamentary Reform through Parliament itſelf, on the Genuine Principles of the Conſtitution." If you ſhould admit theſe alterations, my ſentiments will go in concurrence with yours, and I ſhall highly approve the formation of ſuch a Society in London. Whether my name and attendance may be given without offence in Yorkſhire, and greater injury to the cauſe than benefit, I am not quite certain. On this point I will conſult my Friends, and act with their concurrence.

I have only now to add, that I am fully ſenſible of the good-will and eſteem ſo kindly

kindly expreſſed in your Letter; and I do conſtantly rely upon the continuance of that friendſhip, of which I have received ſo many proofs.

I am with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Moſt faithfully your's,

C. WYVILL.

THE END.

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